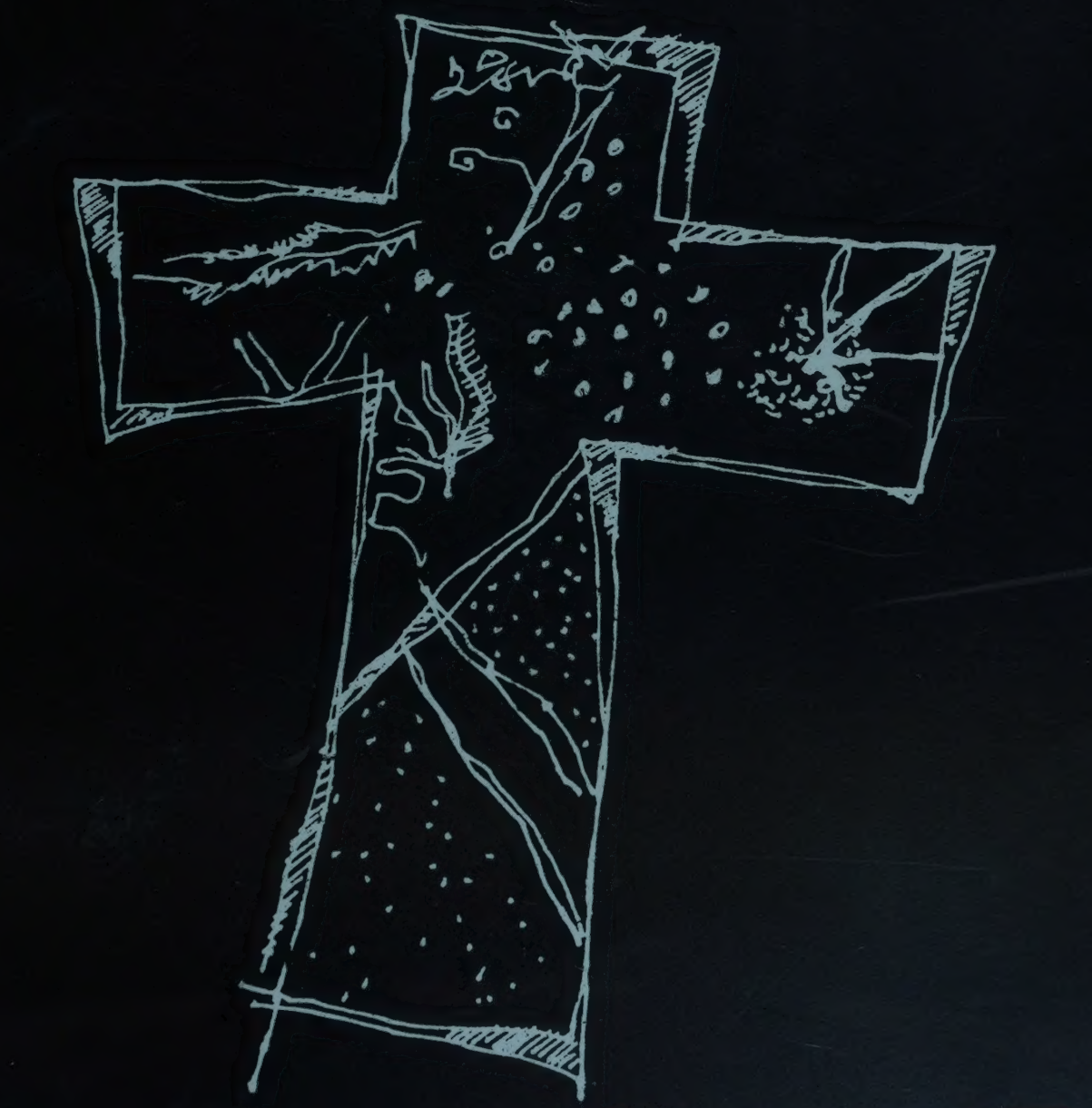
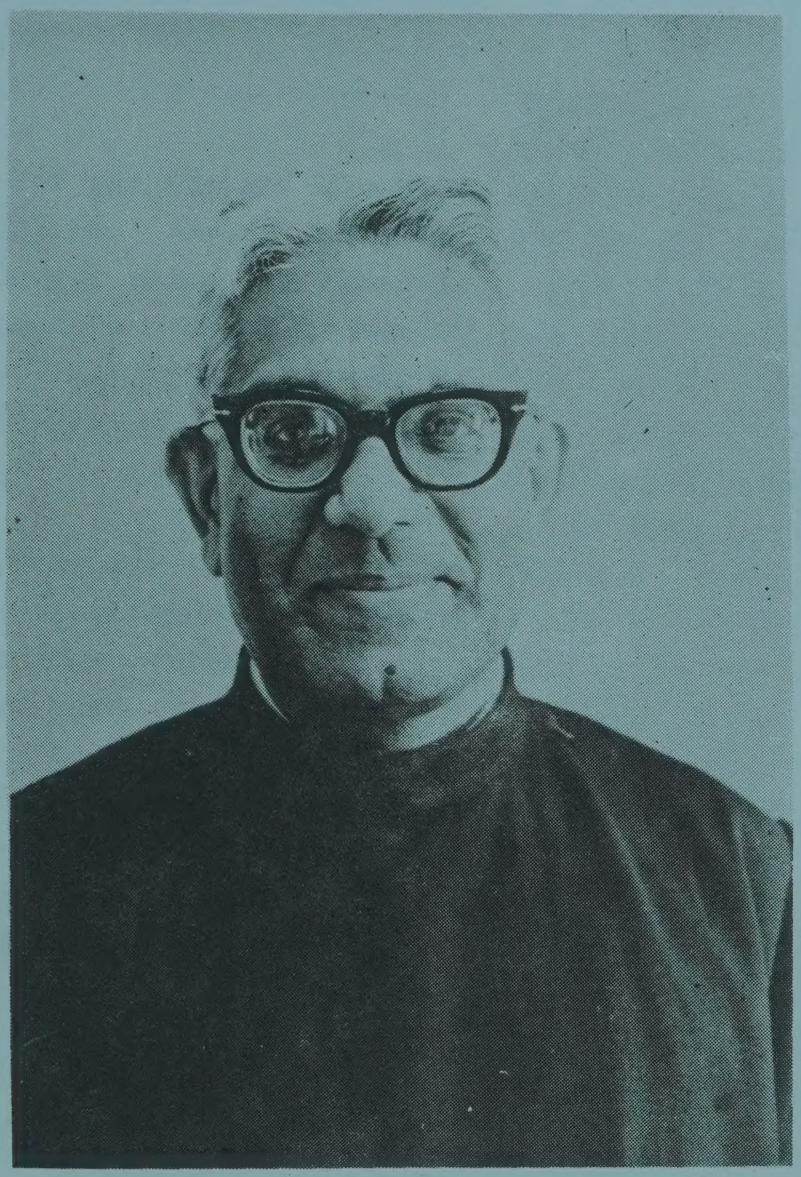
Rev. Dr. K. C. Joseph



Cover and Graphics designed by **S.G. Vasudev**

DEDICATED

to the memory of



Rev. Dr. K.C. JOSEPH

12 April 1915 - 6 August 1993

"Well done, my good and faithful servant;
Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

(St. Matthew 25: 21)

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PREFACE

The path to hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. Our intention in embarking upon the task of putting together a publication in fond remembrance of the Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph (1914-1993) was certainly good. Unfortunately, a combination of circumstances conspired to delay the project unconscionably. Our sincere apologies are due, particularly, to those friends who kindly and promptly sent us their articles over two years ago.

Dr. Joseph had a penchant for proverbs and used them generously to teach us about life. One of these was: there's no use crying over spilt milk. So, following his example of always looking on the bright side of things, we are happy to have the publication ready at least in time for his third death anniversary, which falls on 6 August 1996.

The publication is divided into two sections: one containing articles in which friends and family reminisce about him and the other containing articles written by him on a range of subjects over the years.

We are sorry that many of the wonderful tributes paid to him by speakers belonging to different Churches and communities in Bangalore during his funeral service and the memorial meetings and services that followed are not included here because we were not alert enough to ask for the texts immediately. We are grateful to all those who spoke so movingly of him on those occasions. We also wish to place on record our gratitude to the many friends and relatives who wrote condolence letters to us at the time, warmly recalling him and the relationship they shared with him. Space constraints unfortunately prevented the inclusion of excerpts from these here.

The selection of his own writings included here reflects his wide-ranging interests and concerns. We have deliberately included several articles relating to the Syrian Orthodox Church, even though some are a little outdated, because they contain information and insights that are not readily available to ordinary people even within the Church. Dr. Joseph's sermons were widely appreciated for their clarity, depth and relevance to daily life; we have included a few for which the full texts are available (he always prepared his sermons with great care but often spoke from notes rather than a written text). Also included are articles by him on his "guru," Mr. K.C. Chacko, and on Mr. V.M. Ittyerah, a close friend and senior colleague from the Union Christian College, Alwaye; Dr. Joseph was noted for his eloquent eulogies. A few articles related to counselling, the activity he was enthusiastically engaged in during the latter part of his life, almost to the very end, round up the selection.

Putting together this publication has been an educational and inspirational experience. It has also made us acutely conscious of how extraordinarily privileged we were to have been part of Dr. Joseph's family.

Anna Joseph, Rebecca Kurian, Sarah A. John and Ammu Joseph

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The Revd Dr. K.C. Joseph,
B.A., (Madras), M.A. (Madras), Th.D. (Toronto),
Curriculum Vitae

Home and Education: Was born in an Orthodox family in Kerala, on 12 April 1915. Took the B.A. Degree from the Madras University in 1934 (Mathematics); and the M.A. Degree from the Madras University in 1937 (English Language & Literature). After two years Intramural study in the Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies received the Degree of Doctor of Theology in 1951. Thesis on John Henry Newman.

Professional Experience: Was teaching English Literature in the Universities of Madras and Kerala from 1937 to 1960; was Professor and Head of the Department of English in the Union Christian College, Alwaye, from June 1955.

Became also:

1) Member of Board of Studies and Board of Examiners in the University of Kerala.
2) Examiner in English and Liturgies for the University of Serampore.
3) Examiner in English for Osmania University, and for the Public Service Commission of India.
4) Member of the Governing Board of the Union Christian College, Alwaye.
5) Member, Planning Commission of the Orthodox Church in India.

Was ordained priest of the Orthodox Church in India in 1954, by the Most Revd. Augen Mar Thimotheos, who became H.H. Moran Mar Basilios Augen I, Catholicos of the East, later on.

From September 1960 to August 1967: Professor in the Theological College of the Holy Trinity, Addis Ababa; Dean of the College from September 1963 to August 1967.

Was appointed in 1966 a member of the 30-man International, Interdenominational Academic Council responsible for the organization of the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies, Jerusalem, and served in that capacity till August 1972.

From September 1967 to August 1973: Secretary for Scholarships, World Council of Churches, Geneva.

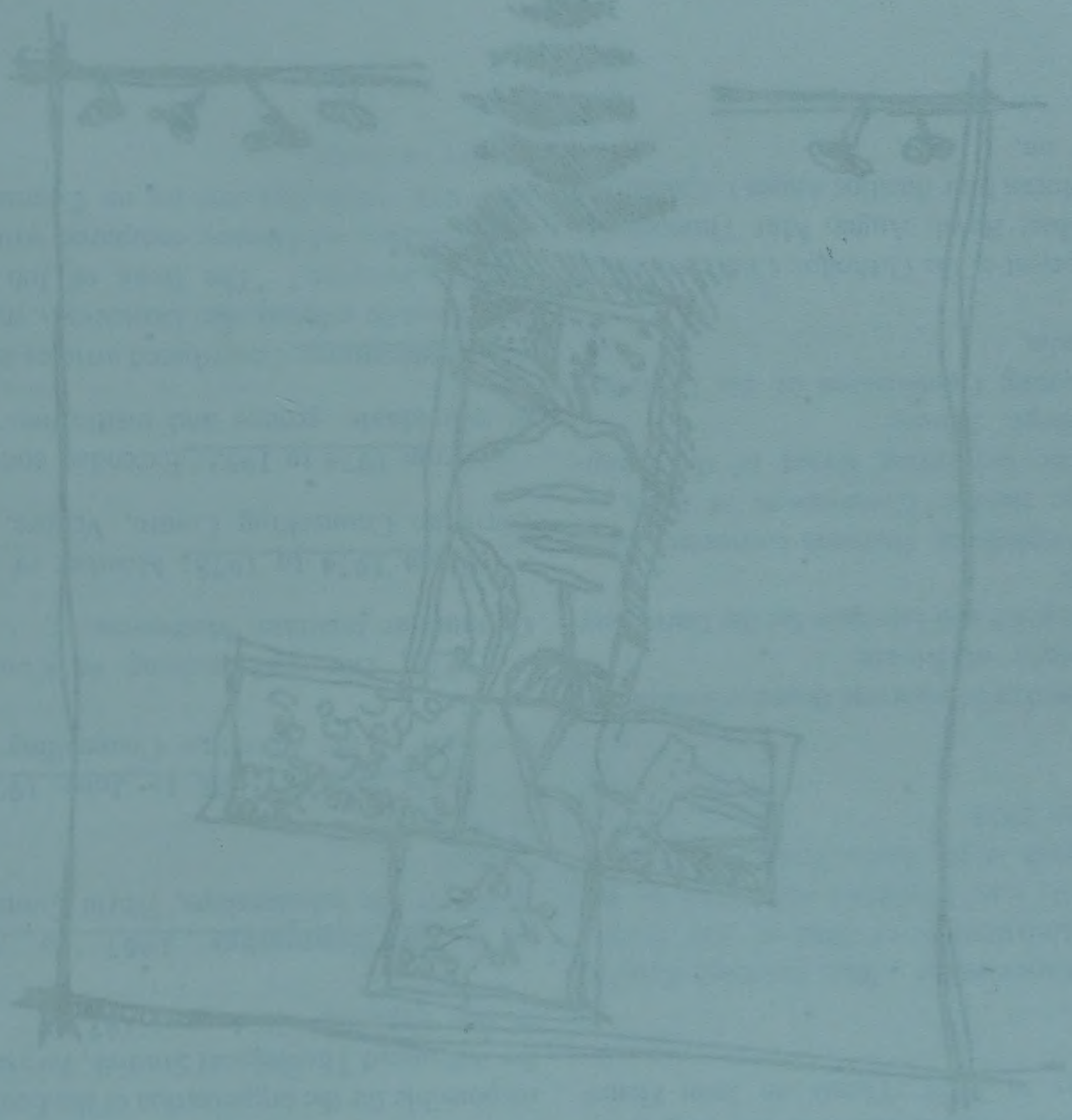
From August 1972 to June 1973: Member of the staff of the Christian Counselling Centre, Vellore

1973: Obtained training in Counselling at the Cairnmillar Institute, Melbourne.

From 1974 to 1978: Member of the staff of the Christian Counselling Centre, Vellore.

From 1974 to 1993: Extended counselling services to individuals, groups and institutions in Bangalore.

Publications: Contributed articles to various learned magazines on subjects like "Dostoevsky, the Great Russian," "D.H. Lawernce," "The Book of Job," "The Marxist Interpretation of History compared with the Christian," etc., and syndicated articles on Counselling in Church papers in India.



IN MEMORIAM

The Rev. Dr. Joseph died in Bangalore of a heart attack on 6 August 1993. He hadn't been too well since the last week of June and was mostly resting at home. The end came suddenly and unexpectedly, although he was himself prepared for the call whenever it came.

I have the privilege of being one of those who have closely known and loved and respected Joseph Achen over a long period of time - which began in 1941, when I first met him as one of my English teachers in the Union Christian College, Alwaye. He was not Achen then, but Deacon Joseph. Indeed, for many people of my generation, Achen is better known as Joseph Chemmachen. Although our paths went their different ways in the following years, they chanced to cross from time to time in many different parts of the globe. The last of these periods and the happiest and longest came about when we happened to be neighbours in Bangalore over the last nine years and more. Achen's closeness to us, physically and in friendship, was a source of great satisfaction for our family. An hour spent with Achen was an hour well spent for in that hour, no matter how frequently it came round, one was afforded glimpses into the depths of the mind of a man of learning, wisdom, compassion and humour. Whether the topic involved faith or ecumenism, theology, literature, current affairs, or simply reminiscences of some of the great men and women he had known, he always had something fresh and authentic to say.

As a young lecturer in the UCC, Deacon Joseph was one of the much loved figures on the campus, not only for the excellence of his teaching of English poetry, but for his winsome manners, his transparent friendliness and easy approachability. He was also at that time editor of the College Magazine. Anything that failed to come up to the editor's exacting standards stood the risk of rejection, as I myself learned from experience. It couldn't have been otherwise because for himself Achen set high standards of excellence and probity.

Achen had, over the years, as I came to discover in my closer knowledge of him, four chief allegiances, to all of which he gave his unstinted attention and support. These were: the Church, UCC, Alwaye Fellowship House, and the Medico-Pastoral Association in Bangalore.

Achen's loyalty to his Church has been unwavering since his earliest years although that never stopped him from expressing his dissent over what he thought was not entirely fair or right in certain matters of policy or action. But the more important point, and one from which we might all take lessons for our profit and the good of the Church Universal, is that the seeds of inter-Church fellowship that had taken root in his mind in his student days had blossomed into a genuine concern for Christian unity. Not many may have known that Achen played an important role in organising programmes for Unity Octave in Bangalore in January each year, in an attempt to bring different Churches together in shared worship, and to help them understand each other's point of view. There was, at the same time, a streak of Orthodoxy in him. As a son of the Church and a priest, he held fast to the tenets of the Church, the creed and sacraments, liturgical devotions, and his own private meditations. Above all, he cherished and honoured his priestly calling. It was blessedly appropriate that death claimed him on the anniversary of his ordination to priesthood.

Achen's career was rich and varied, from teaching English at the Madras Christian College and at UCC, to teaching Church History in the Faculty of Theology of the Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and later heading the Faculty as its Dean, to administering the scholarships desk of the World Council of Churches in Geneva and, finally, to training counsellors at the Christian Counselling Centre in Vellore, after equipping himself for it by taking counselling courses in Australia. I believe I am right in thinking that these changes did not diminish his attachment to his first love, which was his college at Alwaye, where he was first a student and then a teacher through the best years of his life. The college exercised a deep influence on many who have passed through it and Achen was pre-eminently one of them. The inspiration of the college and of its founders worked on his young mind for the rest of his long life, or so it would seem from the affection and concern for the college and the nostalgia that came through in his conversation till the end.

Ever since the Alwaye Fellowship House was founded by the late Prof. K.C. Chacko in the forties, Achen was deeply drawn to it because he saw in it a reflection of the ideals of the great founder. It also gave him an occasion to help in fostering the ideals of fellowship. Disregarding the health problems that vexed him of late, and the discomforts of the longish journey, Achen would not miss the annual retreats of the Fellowship House, nor

would he stay away from other Fellowship House Programmes at which he could be of service, or where he could give encouragement by his presence.

Achen's interest in the Medico-Pastrol Association in Bangalore arose from his deeply felt interest in people, especially those in need of help, and his concern for their welfare. He cared deeply for people – children and the young in particular, but also for people of his own generation, many of whom were afflicted by some pain or sorrow. His friendships transcended all barriers; indeed for him barriers didn't exist.

Money, power, fame and influence never entered into Achen's calculations in his choice of occupations or the friendships he cultivated. The famous supplication of Inazo Nitobe, the Japanese Christian statesman, might well have been Achen's own supplication:

I ask for daily bread but not for wealth,
lest I forget the poor.
I ask for strength but not for power,
lest I despise the meek.
I ask for wisdom but not for learning,
lest I scorn the simple.
I ask for a clean name but not for fame,
lest I condemn the lowly
I ask for peace of mind but not for idle hours
lest I fail to hearken the call of duty.

Achen had peace of mind in great abundance, and it shone forth in the happiness that he himself enjoyed and could joyfully transmit to others. It is hard to believe that Achen is no more but the manner of his departure was precisely of the kind that he himself wished for; there was nothing he dreaded more than a lingering death.

As one enters Achen's house one sees a picture that carries this message in print : "You only live once, but if you live it right, once is enough." Achen lived right, in simplicity and goodness, and in charity with his fellow men. While we mourn his death, let us at the same time give thanks to God for his beautiful life, in which he truly practised the words of the Prophet Micah: "He has showed you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God."

P.T. Thomas

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Memorial to Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph

"The Righteous shall be in everlasting Remembrance." (Psalm 112: 6.)

During the course of July and August 1993, we received the sad reports of the demise in Bangalore of two outstanding Ministers of the Syrian Christian Church. They had both reached lofty heights by their breadth of vision and thoroughness of execution. These two brilliant sons of Kerala had settled down in Bangalore and were sources of inspiration to the Church and the community. I am referring to the Rev. Dr. M.A. Thomas of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, who passed away on June 25, 1993, aged 79, and the Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph of the Orthodox Syrian Church, who passed away on August 6, 1993, aged 78. Both these distinguished Achens of our churches were men of a clear ecumenical vision who unstintingly stood for the unity of Christendom. Their styles of functioning were different but, as George Orwell said of Gandhiji, "What a clean smell they have left behind!" My touching on the late Rev. Dr. M.A. Thomas is occasioned by the chronological and geographical proximity of his death with that of the Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph, who was intimately connected with the life and mission of the Union Christian College.

Born in 1915 at Koothattukulam, Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph was an undergraduate student of the Mathematics B.A. Class of this College in the early 1930s. After taking his B.A. Degree creditably, he was appointed tutor in English in this College. Later he went to the Madras Christian College and took his M.A. in English Language and Literature. In 1937 he joined this College as Asst. Lecturer in English and Sub-Warden of the Holland Hostel. In 1939 he was appointed lecturer in the Madras Christian College and he accepted that appointment. He was a close associate of the then principal of that famous institution, Rev. Dr. A.J. Boyd.

In 1942, when Mr. A.M. Varkey left Alwaye, Dr. Joseph was invited to join this college once again. He accepted the invitation and filled the gap created by Mr. Varkey's absence. Perhaps the closeness he had with Mr. K.C. Chacko was what made him come back here from Tambaram. He served this college in different capacities as Lecturer, Professor and Head of the Dept. of English, Warden, Superintendent of Works, Secretary to the Standing Council and the Fellowship of the College, Advisor to the Student Union, Editor of the College Magazine and Bursar. Wherever he worked, he brought the imprint of his personality to bear on the job.

He went on study leave to Canada in 1949 and returned with a doctorate in Theology from Wycliff College in Toronto. In 1960 he accepted the post of Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the Haile Selassie I University of Ethiopia. Later he served the World Council of Churches as Executive Secretary (Scholarships) at Geneva. From there he went over to Australia and underwent a course in Psychotherapy at Melbourne. He served as a Counsellor at Vellore and Bangalore and was a great source of comfort to very many who were suffering from mental problems. In 1978 he settled down in Bangalore and was doing very useful work at his residence, which he named Counsel House, and also at many other centres to which he was often invited.

Rev. Joseph is survived by his wife, Anna Joseph, a distinguished educationist and a fluent writer in English, who ably assisted and cooperated with her husband in his work. She was a brilliant student of English Literature and passed her M.A. with the top rank in the Madras Presidency. Their daughters, Reebe, Samu and Ammu, are all well-settled in life.

Dr. Joseph was a forceful personality and never failed to make an impression on individuals and groups that he came across, even when they disagreed with him. He was a very warm-hearted friend and an engaging conversationalist. Sometimes he was emotional; that only showed the warm heart beneath. I remember occasions when he became strongly emotional at meetings of the College Fellowship.

During those days, membership to the Fellowship was granted only to those against whom there was no negative vote among the existing members. As a close-knit body, the Fellowship was to be a unanimous group. Therefore, at the time of admission of new members, there could only be positive or neutral votes if a member was to be admitted. A single negative vote had the effect of a veto. Knowing this, the members were extremely careful and very prayerful in casting their votes. One would cast a negative vote only if one was absolutely certain that the new entrant would be a hindrance to the work of the Fellowship and of the College. Viewed from a political perspective, this is not democracy but the rule of the majority. At the same time, it was not anti-democratic. When we envisage a united team, as among

the permanent members of the Security Council of the UN, it is important that all should pull in the same direction. Admittedly this is liable to be misused unless it is exercised with the utmost caution. Negative votes in the Fellowship were cast very sparingly, though it must be said that sometimes such votes were cast. I remember an occasion when Dr. Joseph, as Secretary to the Fellowship, came across a negative vote. He burst into tears. An article in the Reader's Digest on strong men says that tears need not be an index to an unsteady or weak heart. Winston Churchill broke down in tears during World War II when he visited West Minister Abbey and the surrounding buildings, which had been reduced to shambles in the blitz attack of Hitler's war planes.

Dr. K.C.J Joseph was a thoroughly human person who enjoyed the good things of life - good food, good clothes, wholesome laughter. He had an aversion to and intolerance of all that was shabby and unwholesome in talk, in habits and in material surroundings. He was a tall and handsome person who could not fail to make a favourable impression on any audience or group. During the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of this College, he was sent by the College Fellowship on a fund-raising campaign which he accomplished most successfully. Our present College Library building is the outcome of his efforts. He was much sought after as a conference leader and speaker. While he was Head of the Dept. of English he had to undergo treatment at Vellore for a slipped disc. For a long time after that he had to wear a shell while sitting, standing or walking. But this disability never came in the way of the very efficient discharging of his duties. He encouraged us to read papers at department meetings and often himself read papers and joined in the discussions. His classes were very interesting, especially because he was a little theatrical in his teaching style.

At the demise of Mr. K.C. Chacko in 1947, Dr. Joseph published an article in the Madras Christian College Magazine. He closed the article with a simile thus:

"The life of K.C. Chacko has, like a pebble, sunk silently to the bottom of a clear pool. But the ripples that it has produced will go on affecting the lives of very many beings for a long long time." Perhaps this is true of the life of Rev. Joseph himself, who influenced such a large group of students, co-workers, Church and society for the good. Let us thank God for his life, a life of dedication and sanctity, a life of graciousness and friendship, a most loving and lovable life.

C.T. Benjamin

[A sermon preached at the Evening Service in the U.C. College Chapel]

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MY FRIEND, K.C. JOSEPH ACHEN

I have only pleasant memories of "K.C. Joseph Achen" (as I used to call him after he became a priest). Our acquaintance began when we started our undergraduate studies in the C.M.S. College, Kottayam, in the early 1930s. We were the same age and were both in the Mathematics group.

Even in those student days, Joseph Deacon impressed me as an orderly and disciplined person. He had a sharp nose and always wore a charming smile on his face. He was punctual and hard-working and, at the same time, very helpful and sociable. He wore a white deacon's robes. We became friends within a short time and this friendship lasted for over 60 years till his demise in 1993.

Both of us became heart-patients in the 1970s but that did not prevent us from spending many happy hours together. We never saw each other in our sick-beds, although both of us have been hospitalised at various times.

In July, a month before he died, his daughter, Ammu, had written to us that Achen's condition was causing anxiety and that if we wanted to see him before he was too sick we should go to Bangalore without delay. My wife insisted that we should go and see Achen immediately and so we went to Bangalore and spent about two hours with Achen and Baby about a fortnight before his death. Achen had no visible signs of any ailment and talked to us in his usual, pleasant manner, asking for news of our children, especially my youngest daughter, Rachel (Baba), who was helped by Achen's counselling and advice during a crisis in her life. We had tea and snacks together, and came away with the impression that Achen would live for many more years (though we were told by Ammu that he had been advised bypass surgery but had refused to undergo any invasive treatment even if it would possibly prolong his life by a few years). Within a fortnight of our visit, we were informed of Achen's demise. We could not attend the funeral and so I was spared the sorrowful memory of seeing Achen on his deathbed and I only have joyful memories of happy conversation and fellowship with him and his family just a few days before his death.

Whenever we met, Achen and I used to reminisce about our Mathematics teacher in the C.M.S. College, Professor P.A. Subramania Iyer, a unique personality. He was a Mathematical genius and his lectures were a treat to those of us who paid close attention to them. Like all genii, the professor had his eccentricities and peculiarities. At the same time, he had a sense of humour, a ready wit and he was good at retorts. But he also had his prejudices.

One of the professor's preconceptions was that all deacons were dullards and not fit for the study of Maths. When he first saw Joseph Deacon in class, he seemed to have this notion about him, too. He would occasionally crack jokes at the deacon's expense. While teaching plus and minus signs, he would say: "Take this deacon. He was a human being before. Put a cap on his head and he becomes a deacon. Remove the cap from the deacon's head and he becomes a human being. So, a human being plus a cap equals a deacon, a deacon minus a cap is a human being: i.e., a+b=c, c-b=a." All of us, including Joseph Deacon, would laugh at such sallies.

After a few classes, however, the professor understood that Joseph Deacon was a brilliant student. He appreciated the young man's answers to his questions so much that he put him in a select group of 12 brilliant students (out of a class of 36 or 37) for advanced coaching in Maths!

After the Intermediate course (in which both of us got First Classes), Achen joined Union Christian College in Alwaye, and I went to the Maharajah's College for Maths (Hons.). A few years later he came to Kottayam with my uncle, K.C. Chacko, who was keen to start the Church Weekly. They stayed with us. By that time I had begun my law practice, and I was a married man with a daughter. We discussed the feasibility of the scheme, the sort of articles to be published, who should be the editor, etc. N.M. Abraham was chosen as the editor, and we were all asked to write articles. I wrote a humorous piece entitled "Budhimuttukal." I read the article aloud to a group comprising K.C. Chacko, K.C. Joseph Achen, N.M. Abraham and one or two others. All of them roared with laughter and were very appreciative. But for some reason, later on, unwarranted changes were made in the article which took the humour out of it. When K.C. Joseph Achen heard about this, he was angry with the person responsible for making the changes, and requested me to write it again for publication in its original form. But the incident effectively prevented me from writing further articles for the Church Weekly or any other periodicals.

My contact with K.C. Joseph Achen was renewed

when he came to to Madras to make collections for the Golden Jubilee fund for the U.C. College, Alwaye. I then noticed how systematic and organised his life was. He planned each day and each bit of work in advance, committing everything to God and working hard with confidence to achieve his goal. He stayed with us in Madras for one or two weeks as he went about this mission of fund-raising. I observed his simple way of life, his systematic methods and his reliance on God in all matters.

I shall relate an incident that happened during his stay in Madras. I had an old German car, completely reliable in every way except that it had the strange propensity of suddenly losing one of its wheels when on the road. Once I was travelling in this car, along with K.C. Joseph Achen and Dr. Mitrapuram Alexander. We were proceeding along the beach front to my office near the High Court. When we neared the fort, the front wheel came off and ran away on its own. Dr. M., who was new to this experience, thought we were heading for a major accident and cried out, "Help, help!" But K.C. Joseph Achen calmed him down, assuring him that there was no cause for alarm. The car stopped, as it usually did, after running a few feet on three wheels.

By his systematic and hard work, Achen was able to collect a fairly good sum for the Alwaye College from Madras. He then proceeded to Bombay, where he met Dr. John Mathai, who was very critical of people from Kerala collecting donations from Bombay rather than from rich potential donors in their home state. However, because of his regard for K.C. Chacko and others who had started the college, he gave a personal donation of Rs. 5000. When Achen saw the Managing Trustee of TATA Charities, he frankly told him what had transpired in Dr. John Mathai's house. The reaction of the Managing Trustee was most unexpected. He told Achen, "If Dr. John Mathai paid Rs. 5000 for a cause, it must be a worthy one. Therefore we would be happy to give a donation of Rs. 25,000 without even asking Dr. Mathai's opinion." (This incident was related to me by Achen himself). Achen's fund collection mission on behalf of the College was, needless to say, a success, because he believed in his cause and was never put off by rebuffs.

K.C. Chacko used to consult Achen in all important matters and valued his advice greatly. Achen was a help and support to him, especially during periods of great mental strain, as when A.M. Varkey had to resign from the Principalship of the College, when the T.N.Q Bank was closed, when the Malayala Manorama was sealed and when his brothers, K.C. Mammen Mappilai and K.C. Eapen, and his nephew, K.M. Eapen, were arrested and put into jail on baseless criminal charges, all on account of the hostility of C.P Ramaswamy towards K.C. Mammen Mappilai.

During the period when Achen was Secretary for Scholarships in the World Council of Churches in Geneva, my wife and I visited Achen and Baby during a world tour. They welcomed us warmly and were very helpful. Achen was always natural, self-confident, courteous, helpful and hospitable.

After Achen left the World Council of Churches he underwent a course in counselling in Australia and subsequently joined the Christian Counselling Centre in Vellore in the 1970s. During this period we used to meet Achen and Baby fairly often and we became more and more intimate. Achen was keen to start a Counselling Centre attached to the Orthodox Theological College in Kottayam or in the Fellowship House at Alwaye. He wrote to the authorities of both institutions, but neither of them gave a positive response to his letters. Achen told me later that he did not want to thrust his services onto an institution which did not welcome them heartily.

Achen, therefore, settled down in Bangalore and carried on his counselling work there. He helped in the work of the Half-Way Home for the mentally ill and he helped innumerable people, including several couples, with adjustment problems. He continued his services till the very end of his life and he really died in harness.

In spite of his smiling face and courteous manners, Achen would always stand firm against all hypocrisy. He was totally against people who, in the name of "Orthodoxy," wanted to condemn others and achieve their own selfish ends. He had thoroughly studied what real Orthodoxy meant and resisted all false interpretations of it.

Whenever I think of dear K.C. Joseph Achen, I have before me the picture of a unique personality with a cheerful face and eyes brimming over with kindness, compassion and love, soft-spoken but clear in expression, every ready to help others, very methodical and systematic and, above all, with an abiding faith in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

P.C. Kurien

SOME REMINISCENCES

A village lad from Kothamangalam, I entered the portals of the Union Christian College, Alwaye, towards the end of June 1943, seeking admission to the Junior Intermediate Class. One of my early contacts in the college was with Rev. Deacon K.C. Joseph, maybe because some of the achens in my parish church knew him. I went to that premier ecumenical institution steeped in all sorts of beliefs and customs ascribed to popular Orthodoxy. To my Orthodox mind, the panorama of worship according to three different church traditions was at first staggering. My plight was somewhat similar to the plight of a boy of evangelical persuasion thrown open to the dialogue between different religions today. It was K.C. Joseph achen who came to our rescue, inviting us into an understanding of different church traditions during his weekly discussion classes on Sunday afternoons, which were held specially to help bewildered Orthodox students.

I gratefully acknowledge my deep sense of gratitude to the staff members in Alwaye - Joseph Achen, T.B. Thomas sar and others - who helped me to hold on to my Church tradition while at the same time understanding and appreciating the traditions of other churches. Thanks to them, both I and other students of my ilk were able to catch a glimpse of the ecumenical spirit. Sunday evening chapel services, the Student Christian Movement, Bible Circles on Sunday mornings were all factors that helped in this process.

During my four years at Alwaye, I used to visit Joseph Achen and Baby kochamma often in their home and thus began a friendship which has spanned nearly half a century.

Private visits by students to the homes of the staff members residing on campus were a welcome feature of life during my college days. Such visits were very valuable for the students, who used to go to members of the staff for chats or for advice. In most cases family-like ties developed in the course of time. Some of these friendships flourished and continued into our later life.

While at college, I had occasion to get to know achen's brothers. Especially dear to me was his youngest brother, Thampy (K.C. Paulose), who was my college mate. During my senior intermediate days I had to take my ailing mother to Kottayam for treatment. Travelling by bus was a difficult exercise. When we reached Muvattupuzha, Thampy was at the bus stand waiting for a bus. Seeing me, he ran up to me. When he learnt of my mission he eagerly volunteered to accompany us to Kottayam, despite my protests. That was a very great help to me. Thampy was always like that - ever willing to render help wherever needed. He went back only after seeing my mother admitted to the hospital. I often recall that day and Thampy's generous and loving offer. When I heard of his untimely demise in Bangalore, I couldn't help shedding tears, though I was not prone to such visible expressions of emotion during those days.

Even after leaving college I kept up my contact with Joseph Achen. This was mainly in connection with my work with the Church Weekly. Achen stood by me and supported me in most of the stands I took on issues in the Church Weekly. He supported progressive positions, wherever they were evident. He had a very clear conception of the roles of the laity and the clergy in the church. He was unhappy with some of the current trends in the church – for example, the discrimination against women, the adherence to statute books rather than practice, etc.

Once there was criticism about an editorial in the Church Weekly on the status of the laity within the church. On September 28, 1981, Joseph Achen wrote to me, among other things:

" I can see that some sentiments in the report and the editorial might not please bishops who have, perhaps unconsciously, slipped into the position that nobody should point out Episcopal errors or misjudgements. But that doesn't necessarily mean that a journal like the Church Weekly, honestly working for the good of the Church, should avoid writing about them. I personally think that what you published in the issue of September 20 is helpful. Those who are irritated would do well to examine their own motivations.

"The Church Weekly is continuing to be a creative and thought-provoking Christian journal and you have my wholehearted support. Do go ahead without worrying too much about criticisms."

Achen used to encourage me to write. It was at his instance that I wrote a biography of St. Francis of Assissi in Malayalam: "Assissiyile Premakokilam."

Another area where Achen and I came to cooperate was the Alwaye Fellowship House. Achen was very involved in the work of the Fellowship House from before it was actually established until 1960, when he went to

work outside India. He very much wanted the Fellowship House to continue to promote the aims which its prime initiator, K.C. Chacko, had consciously adopted as his guidelines

Elaborating upon the fellowship method of work and the consciously ecumenical orientation of its work and witness as the twin emphases which the Fellowship House should continue to foster, Achen once wrote:

"I suppose it is not known to all new members of the Fellowship Association or Council that the Constitution under which these bodies function was adopted some time after the death of K.C. Chacko. It was at a meeting of friends and disciples of K.C. Chacko, including several persons who were not members of the Malankara Orthodox Church, that Sri. V.M. Ittyerah (the oldest and perhaps the closest associate of K.C. Chacko), himself a member of the Mar Thoma Church, made the proposal that, for convenience in many ways, the administration of the Fellowship House be entrusted to members of the Malankara Syrian Church who chose to be associated with the work envisaged. This proposal was accepted as the basis of the Constitution but, so far as I know, no one who was a party to that decision at that time wanted the Fellowship House to be anything other than a centre of ecumenical activity.

"In my considered opinion, the Alwaye Fellowship House should continue as an ecumenical centre for informal Christian Fellowship, where lay as well as clerical groups, families and individuals come freely for spiritual renewal through retreats, conferences, study seminars, counselling and other human relations activities."

Joseph Achen had a very clear perception of the place and participation of the laity in the church. He had spoken and written about it. He had a way of explaining certain crucial and complex issues lucidly. For example, see how he explains the Ignatian statement:

"The Orthodox Church is organised according to the Episcopal System. As St. Ignatius put it, the Church is where the faithful are gathered around their bishop. To understand St. Ignatius correctly, the background of his Epistles has to be kept in view. St. Ignatius lived, taught and wrote his Epistles as the Pastor of a church under persecution, to console and strengthen people whose loyalty to Christ was being tested in the crucible of suffering inflicted by enemies of the Gospel. When he asked those harrowed Christians to preserve their unity by keeping close to their bishops, who were themselves under persecution, his words were surely not meant to support any authoritarian claims of individuals who wanted power over others. In traditional Roman usage, Episcopacy came to mean something rather different from what St. Ignatius had in mind: Monarchical Episcopacy, in which the bishop is conceived of as the source of authority. The Orthodox conception of episcopacy may be described as Pastoral Episcopacy, where the bishop is not the monarch or ruler, but the shepherd or father of the people. The bishop is counsellor and guide rather than magistrate and rules by consent rather than by fear." Joseph Achen used to say that the different offices of the Church should be thought of in terms of "functions" and "responsibilities" rather than in terms of power or authority. Authority in the church is to be clearly differentiated from authority in the state or in the world.

He was of the opinion that it is important in the Christian Church to distinguish between the concept of "leadership" and certain perverse concepts of "authority." Leaders are needed for the proper functioning of all societies and groups, and it is necessary for people to learn to acknowledge leadership. However, leadership is not the same as the kind of "authority" that has to rely on "law" to enforce obedience from ordinary members. The State, which has the responsibility to curb antisocial activities, rightly uses power and authority to enforce law. But the church exists not to duplicate the State but to inspire people to live by the law of love.

Achen used to assert that megalomania and grandiosity, whether in lay people, priests or bishops, will not help the development of a community of love held together by mutual caring and mutual respect. What is needed is the kind of moral leadership that fosters loving human relations where individuals are encouraged to recognize their self-worth and to make their maximum contribution to the human good. Achen had no doubt that the ability to inspire and coordinate the creative impulses of members of the group is the mark of true leadership. It is where this is absent that people resort to authoritarianism and legalism. Once he wrote to me in a letter accompanying an article for the Church Weekly:

"In the process I want also to draw the attention of 'leaders of worship' in our Church to the fact that what they lead is not worship unless it evokes the feeling of reverence in their congregations - reverence to God as well as reverence to other human beings. Think of the Holy Qurbana Services conducted under police protection, with the intention of establishing property rights, and 'spiritual fathers' enjoying the flattery of servile sycophants."

After leaving Alwaye, Joseph Achen and Baby Kochamma moved to varied areas of activities - in Addis Abbaba, Geneva, Melbourne and Vellore. At Vellore, Achen had an attack of angina in 1978. By June that year doctors advised him that physical exertion was to be avoided and he should lead a more relaxed life. That is how the family shifted to Bangalore. He reached his new residence in Indiranagar, Bangalore, on December 23, 1978.

During the past decade I used to visit Bangalore at least once a year. On every occasion I made it a point to visit Achen at his residence and talk with him and Kochamma about various mutual concerns. They were occasions of reminiscences, of exchanging notes, of bringing reports of persons and events up to date. Their love and warmth never failed. We talked of old friends and associates and their doings. We used to discuss the current position of the Fellowship House and the Church Weekly. Whenever Achen, alone or accompanied by Kochamma, visited Kerala, we used to visit them and discuss various matters.

Baby Kochamma is an accomplished lady. She took her Honours degree in English with First Rank in 1938 from the Madras University. She is a gifted teacher and has taught in several institutions off and on, at many levels. I think her last stint as a teacher was in the Ida Scudder school, Vellore. She continued to teach there till July 1978 but, because they were moving to Bangalore, decided to call it a day and stop teaching.When the children asked her, "Ma'am, why don't you come back?" She told them: "That is the note on which to leave, not wait till you ask, why don't you leave?" That is the remarkable woman she is.

By noon on August 6, 1993, I got a phone call to say that Joseph Achen had died. I felt I should go to Bangalore. There was no way I could get a train ticket. So I decided to catch a bus. Luckily I got a seat on the evening bus, which got me to Bangalore the following morning. I could thus attend the funeral on the 7th and meet the members of the bereaved family.

Joseph Achen was always human, humane and considerate. He wrote to me on May 26, 1987:

"The Manorama of Sunday, May 24, arrived here only today and it was from the paper that I got the news of your father's passing away. A person would even welcome death as an end to the tedium of physical inactivity and as an entry into the promised land of life after life. However, for us who are left in the world, the departure of our dear ones is a sad event. The reality that we shall hereafter not see them or communicate with them through the body is not easy to accept. We shall miss them and the void in our heart cannot be filled. Nevertheless, let us take comfort in the recollection of the many ways in which the life of our departed dear one has been a blessing from God in this life itself, and in the assurance that the Lord has provided a restful home to our dear one with all those who love him. And let us also prepare ourselves to go into that home when our time comes."

I remembered how well he himself lived out these statements during the closing days. His son-in-law, Alexander John, who is a famous heart surgeon, volunteered to operate on him, but he courteously declined.

Achen's quiet assurance, his generous help to others and his deep-rooted faith were all remarkable. I knew him as a loving and warm friend. He had a friendly word or a happy nod for anyone he met on the way.

An aged Scot on his deathbed was asked what he thought of death, and he replied, "It matters little to me whether I live or die. If die I will be with Jesus, and if I live Jesus will be with me." I think Achen had the same attitude to life and death.

M. Kurian

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The Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph

My association with K.C.J. began when he was in the Degree class and I in the intermediate class at the Union Christian College, Alwaye. In those days he was widely known as 'Deacon Joseph.' He had the great benefit of a truly Christian upbringing and his parents were proud to offer their brightest son to the ministry. He was not the pious type but was energetic and active. It was the love of Jesus that prompted him to dedicate himself to the ministry at the age of 16! K.C.J was proud to consider himself a disciple of His Grace Augen Mar Timotheos of the Malankara Syrian Church in whom he found a saint and scholar.

During our college days in Alwaye, both of us came under the influence of Mr. K.C. Chacko, one of the founders of the Alwaye College. This was an influence that lasted to the end of K.C.J.'s life. He had qualities of leadership and was one of the few people I knew who could interpret to others the mind of K.C. Chacko on the concept of Christian Vocation, Fellowship and Denominational Cooperation. Union Christian College was a project based on these concepts. K.C.J. and I had fairly close contact as students in the Alwaye College days. We were both susceptible to hero-worship. K.C.J. had an unbounded admiration for his Maths Professor, T.S. Venkataraman, both for his competence in teaching and his highly-principled life.

As a student K.C.J. was highly regarded in the college and when he graduated with distinction, the college appointed him as a Tutor in English on a salary of Rs. 45 p.m., a ridiculously low sum today, but 50 years ago the college mess used to provide reasonably good food for Rs. 8 per month!

In 1935, K.C.J. left Alwaye College to do his Post-graduate course in English in the Madras Christian College. Alwaye College was regarded as a 'daughter' college of the M.C.C. Like the M.C.C., Alwaye set great store by its residential character which, perhaps, accounts for the special relationship between staff and students that was unique about both Alwaye and Tambaram.

After obtaining his M.A. degree, K.C.J rejoined the English staff of the Alwaye College. After two further years, K.C.J. left Alwaye again to join the Madras Christian College as Lecturer. He had gone to Madras after a period of close association with the founders of the Alwaye College - K.C. Chacko, A.M. Varki, C.P. Mathew and V.M. Ittyerah. As a student and teacher at Madras he got an opportunity to get to know some of the eminent Scottish Presbyterian professors there - Boyd, Macphail, Macnicol and Martin. Madras helped him to imbibe the high and noble traditions of Christian Higher Education.

K.C.J was thus equipped to make a rich contribution to Alwaye when he returned there as lecturer (1942-43). The atmosphere of the college was somewhat turbulent then and Principal Varki had resigned. K.C.J. was invited to join the English staff of Alwaye College. Also appointed Warden of Skinner Hostel, he had to set up, organise and run this new residential unit for male students. He had been happy in M.C.C. but felt he had to respond to the call from Alwaye because an unpleasant situation had arisen involving his church also. It was a time of agony for K.C. Chacko but K.C.J. stood solidly behind him, accompanying him on his trips to Kottayam to meet bishops and lay leaders. The crisis in the college was resolved by the appointment of a high-power Review Committee presided over by Dr. A.J. Boyd.

The year 1946 marked the Silver Jubilee of the College. In terms of class rooms and equipment there was a great deal of room for improvement. The College did not belong to a church, an organisation or an individual. The College Council decided to make use of the occasion for fund-raising. Now, everyone knew that extracting money from moneyed but tightfisted Syrian Christians was a daunting task and fund collection was not everybody's cup of tea. But K.C.J. volunteered to do it. He armed himself with letters of sponsorship from a group of outstanding leaders of the community and, leaving his wife and daughter in Christava Mahilalayam, he travelled the length and breadth of South India, trying to collect money and succeeding because he was convinced his cause was a worthy one. He was not embarrassed to harangue, cajole, explain and persuade people but he never begged since it was their privilege to give. After all, there was nothing in it for him. He never stayed in a hotel nor hired a taxi, but stayed with friends and collected more than the princely sum (in those days) of sixty four thousand rupees, spending only a little more than seven hundred rupees in the process. In Bombay, Mrs. John Mathai helped him a great deal in his collection work. To share his joy and excitement when the Tatas gave him Rs. 25,000, he indulged in the luxury of a telegram to Alwaye.

The sixty five thousand rupees he collected was well used to construct a library building, a wing of the Skinner

Hostel and renovate the wood work of the Women's Hostel.

During 1949-51, K.C.J. went to Canada on study leave and took a Doctorate from the University of Toronto. Rejoining the College in 1951, he became the Head of the English Department when Prof. A. Aruvamudam Ayyangar retired.

K.C.J. was closely associated with the Fellowship House, an institution meant to work out the ideals of the late K.C. Chacko, to run a retreat centre and carry out business projects based on Christian principles-a tall order. Even now useful seminars are held there occasionally. The Church Weekly is published from there and in September every year there is a retreat in remembrance of K.C.C.'s death anniversary. That a bachelor's death anniversary has been remembered and observed year after year for nearly 50 years is a tribute to his God-centred life and witness and the influence he had on people.

Baby (Mrs. K.C.J.) supported and sustained K.C.J. throughout his career of varied activities, but she had an individuality and convictions of her own. House-keeping did not exhaust her talents and capabilities. A notable aspect of her contribution to society was the revival of the Girls' School, Christava Mahilalayam, in which she actively participated (when it was on the verge of liquidation), along with a few like-minded friends like Mrs. Anna Ittyerah and Mrs. Rebecca Grace Thomas. In reorganising the school, they generally followed the principles (like the Group Method of Working) on which the Alwaye College was founded.

In 1960, K.C.J. was invited by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to help organise their Theologicial College and raise it to University level. He had never entertained the idea of leaving Alwaye. He had believed in U.C.C., collected money for it with conviction and had no plans to seek greener pastures. As far as he was concerned, Alwaye was green enough. The College was going through a difficult time when the differences between the Patriarch's party and Catholicos's party were raising their heads even among members of the Fellowship. Perhaps that situation of doubt and distrust made him regard the invitation from the Ethiopian Church as an answer to his agonised prayers. According to the Rule of Life of the College Fellowship, no member could leave the work of the College unless he was convinced that God wanted his services elsewhere. After sharing his doubts and concerns with close friends and family, he took three years' leave of absence and went to Ethiopia but, to the end of his days, Alwaye was never absent from his thoughts and prayers.

K.C.J. did a good job in the Theological College, Addis Ababa, reorganised the syllabus and the library, raised the standards of admission, and got eminent theologians like Rev. V.C. Samuel to join the staff.

When the Secretary for Orthodox Churches in the World Council of Churches came on a visit to Addis Ababa and asked him if he would be interested in joining the staff of W.C.C., he decided to move on, as the College in Ethiopia was now in the safe hands of Rev. V.C. Samuel. In Geneva he was Secretary for Scholarships for five years. Perhaps he did not continue there because he did not like an office job that did not involve directly working with people. Bishop Newbegin had told him about the Christian Counselling Centre in Vellore. Without staying on in W.C.C. for the nine years required before he could be entitled to a pension, he decided to join the C.C.C. After spending a year there in 1973, the Josephs went to Melbourne, Australia, so that K.C.J. could undergo a full year's training in counselling and psychotherapy. Mrs. Joseph spent a year teaching English to 'angry' immigrant children from Europe. Most of them had problems in an English-speaking country and needed special help. She attended counselling workshops in the evening and made many friends.

From 1974 to '78, K.C.J. was back at the Christian Counselling Centre, Vellore, helping train batches of people in counselling. After surviving an angina attack in 1978, he moved to Bangalore to be near a brother. For 15 years he lived a quiet, useful life there, preaching in the Orthodox Church on Sundays, going to help at the Half-Way Home for the mentally ill and generally sharing in the community life of the neighbourhood and city. K.C.J. died suddenly and unexpectedly on August 6 1993, the anniversary of his ordination. Throughout his life he kept a living interest in the Alwaye College and the Alwaye Fellowship House.

The crowd that turned up for his funeral was a grand tribute to the affection and esteem in which he was held in the Christian community in Bangalore.

T. B. Thomas

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MEMORIES OF JOSEPH ACHEN AND ALWAYE

Everyone knows that memories and impressions of childhood greatly influence our later lives. Those of us who grew up in the Union Christian College, Alwaye, in the nineteen forties and fifties were indeed fortunate.

Long before the World Council of Churches and other organisations started talking about ecumenicism, the late Mr. K.C. Chacko's influence had made the ecumenical experience at Union Christian College a reality. All of us in the campus grew up with our own church identity and had our denominational services in the college chapel on Sunday mornings but there was a common service in English in the evening which was always well-attended. The Christian fellowship and the spirit of community living experienced by all of us, even as children, made the concept of unity and love a shared reality.

I can still remember that my father was always attending Fellowship meetings, that my mother and the other Kochammas were always busy with their prayer groups and social service activities, that students from the hostels were always welcome in our homes.

As for the children on the campus, we were always in and out of each other's homes, happy and carefree. There was a lot of sharing and concern and total absence of rivalry and unkind gossip. Baby Kochamma would leave Reebe, when she was a baby, at our house when she went to church. We used to look forward to that. Being the only boy on the campus, my brother had the task of buying note-books from Alwaye town for all the girls. We had Christmas plays and carol singing and common Onam and Christmas feasts.

Achen did not teach me as I did not study in U C College. When he went to Toronto in 1949, Baby Kochamma and Samu stayed in Mahilalayam in one of the cottages. During the lunch break we used to go to the cottage porch and talk to them and generally enjoy ourselves. Simpler times, simpler pleasures. Samu shared her birthday with my father and every year she would ask if the celebration was to be at her house or ours. Many years later we had a common birthday party for them in Vellore. Baby Kochamma was my favourite English teacher at school and even today I remember and try to emulate her teaching methods. The story books that Achen sent to my brother and me from Canada in 1950 are still with me. The campus children are now mostly grey-haired, if not quite old, but whenever we meet how we love to talk about our childhood days on the Alwaye College campus!

My husband and I treasure the bond of friendship we were able to nurture while Achen and Baby Kochamma were at Vellore in the early seventies. Kochamma used to remind me that my mother taught her, she taught me, I taught Reebe in Mahilalayam and Samu's children in Vellore.

One day in May 1954, before I left to join Women's Christian College, Achen came to our house and gave me an English Bible to take to college. I still remember the pleasant expression on his face. Yes, my first and treasured King James version of Bible, which has been with me all these years, was a gift from Achen.

Ammu Jacob Abraham - nee Ittyerah

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K.C. JOSEPH ACHEN: A TRIBUTE

When I finished school, my extended family had serious confabulations as to where I should pursue my higher studies. The choice was between W.C.C. in Madras and U.C.C. in Alwaye. Since my parents were outside India, my uncle, himself an old student of Alwaye College, decided that Alwaye would be a safe place. That is how I landed up in Alwaye in drenched clothes on a wet day in June. I have never regretted that choice for it was just the beginning of many blessings and the friendships in Alwaye have endured to this day.

The news of Joseph Achen's death took me right back to my years in Alwaye, first as a student and later as a member of the staff. Joseph Achen, Gracie Kochamma and Baby Kochamma were my English teachers. To this day it has been a puzzle to me why a group of intelligent, wise, good men in the Alwaye Fellowship would let staff wives teach in the college only if other suitable hands were not available! Since both of them were excellent teachers, we used to think it such a criminal waste of talents.

After I had taken my first degree, Achen suggested that I should do my M.A. in English in the Madras Christian College and he gave me a strong letter of recommendation. Baby Kochamma, with her down-to-earth, practical sense, said, 'Achen is the eternal optimist and gives letters of recommendation to all and sundry. But most of them end up getting third classes. Even Boyd has teased him about his optimism.'

I decided that I would not let Achen down, worked hard and got a second class - in 1960 a second class was an achievement. By the time I came back to Alwaye to teach, Achen had gone to Addis Ababa.

Years passed. I got married and went to teach in a new college in Mavelikara and Achen was by then Secretary for Scholarships with the World Council of Churches. Achen arranged for me to spend a year in Birmingham on a WCC scholarship. I spent a week-end with Achen and Kochamma in Geneva on my way to the U.K. Kochamma had given me some useful tips about the number and nature of clothes I should take. With her experience and sound practical sense, she said that no one was going to pay any attention to my clothes anyway as I would be wearing a coat most of the time in the English weather and the less luggage I brought the more room I would have for anything I might buy to take back to India.

Achen told me to use any money I could save out of my pocket money to see as much of the world as I could. Thanks to him, I travelled by train through Europe – Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome, Athens, Cairo, Beirut. Today I can hardly believe I did all that alone.

I believe that God shapes our lives but he does it through people and one of those who shaped my career and my outlook on life was Joseph Achen. I shall always remember him with gratitude. He was such an encouraging person.

I once taught a poem entitled, The Road not Taken. Sometimes I wonder what direction my life would have taken if I had not taken the road to Alwaye rather than to W.C.C., Madras. I would have missed all the wonderful relationships and valuable experiences I had in Alwaye. I have no regrets. I am what I am, to a great extent, because of Alwaye. Achen was one of those who influenced me and, as I walk down memory lane today, I have so much to be thankful for.

Anna Verghis - nee Chacko

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THE REV. DR. K.C. JOSEPH

It may be appropriate on the anniversary of the Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph's demise to recall some of the hallmarks of his life and the ideals he stood for.

A gentleman to the core, he was a simple, honest and straight-forward person with no affectation or ostentation. He was affable and affectionate, thoughtful and considerate. It was a joy and an inspiration to spend some time in his gracious presence. Conversation with him was always edifying, but he never tried to overawe you with his learning or wisdom; neither did he fail to touch the sympathetic chords of your heart on such occasions.

Dr. Joseph's was a chequered career. He played a variety of roles, all of them admirably. He was first and foremost a teacher. He began his teaching career at the Maras Christian College, from where he also took his Master's degree. Attracted by the ideals of unity and cooperation between churches, he shifted to the Union Christian College, Alwaye, where he had been an undergraduate student. The underlying spirit and ideals of the Fellowship House fraternity caught his imagination and he was deeply attached to it. He was a devoted disciple and colleague of the late Mr. K.C. Chacko. Even after leaving Alwaye, he never missed a chance to go back to Alwaye to be in the congenial atmosphere of the Fellowship House. He regularly attended the annual retreats held in September.

It was in answer to a real and urgent call from the Orthodox Church and the Government of Ethiopia that he left U.C. College and joined the Faculty of Theology of Haile Selassie I University in Addis Ababa in 1960. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church needed some eminent professors from sister churches to teach in the newly launched Faculty of Theology.

With his previous teaching and administrative experience in Kerala, he not only helped organise the Theological Faculty in cooperation with the late Bishop Poladian of the Armenian Orthodox Church and, later on, with Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel but also aided the University authorities in establishing academic policies and standards. As an academician and administrator, he always aimed at the highest standards. While he constantly exhorted his students to strive hard, he never failed to remind his colleagues to be worthy of their calling by continually widening the horizons of their knowledge. He was himself an avid reader and a seeker after knowledge all his life.

The Vatiean's invitation to Dr. Joseph at about this time to join the first Board of Governors to establish the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies and Research in Jerusalem was a public recognition of his standing in the ecumenical and academic world. He rendered significant contributions to the starting and running of the Ecumenical Institute in the early years of its existence.

Although he was primarily a college professor, Joseph Achen never neglected his priestly vocation, to which he was called early in life. As a diligent and conscientious clergyman, he ministered to the spiritual needs of the fairly large Syrian Orthodox Christian community in Ethiopia. Along with his other priest-colleagues, like Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel, Rev. K.V. Koshy and Rev. A.T. Gabriel, who were then in Addis Ababa, he regularly celebrated the Holy Mass, held prayer meetings and conducted annual retreats just prior to Easter. He did all this gratis, with absolute dedication and commitment. It may be said to his great credit and honour that I have never heard him preach a sermon in church without prior preparation and written notes, despite his Biblical knowledge and erudition. He was strongly convinced that preaching the word of God was not something to be taken lightly. I feel it is a lesson to be emulated by some of our all-wise latter-day clergymen.

In the nineteen forties and fifties Joseph Achen from Alwaye was very much in demand as a speaker and leader at the meetings and camps of youth organisations in Kerala and elsewhere. He was an active leader and president of the Student Christian Movement. Hundreds of students were attracted to the Christian calling and a decent way of life in those days, under the influence of leaders like Dr. K.C. Joseph. The University Christian Teachers' Fellowship was another organisation in which he played a leading role in those days.

The venue of Joseph Achen's activities shifted to the World Council of Churches in Geneva in 1967, when he was appointed the Secretary in charge of W.C.C.'s international scholarships. It was a tough job, demanding extensive travel and utmost care in selecting scholars from various countries, placing them in appropriate colleges or universities in different countries and monitoring their academic progress over a period of several years.

After a lifetime of strenuous and arduous work in

different capacities in three continents, when Dr. Joseph left the W.C.C., instead of packing up and going home to enjoy his well-earned rest, the irresistible thirst after new frontiers of knowledge led him to Melbourne, Australia, where he took up the study of psychotherapy and counselling, rather late in life. Equipped with this new area of knowledge and resources, he subsequently joined the Christian Counselling Centre in Vellore, where he rendered yeoman service training counsellors and comforting patients who flocked to Vellore for medical treatment, mental consolation and spiritual guidance.

His work in the area of counselling continued after he settled down in Bangalore in the last chapter of his life. Appropriately he gave the name 'Counsel House' to his abode. In this new role his services extended to numerous people, distressed and distraught with problems of family discord, marital problems, professional tensions, spiritual anxieties and the like; Achen helped them all to live a more healthy, peaceful and worry-free life.

While in Bangalore his services were not confined to personal counselling only. He was actively involved in the work of the Half-Way Home for the mentally disturbed, run by the Medico-Pastoral Association, of which he was a founding member. Even after his stint as secretary of the association was over, he continued to play an active role in the activities of both the the MPA and the Half-Way Home. He kept up his weekly visits to the HWH, helping in the training of counsellors, till six weeks before his death.

Although Achen himself was burdened with a spinal problem from middle age and a heart condition in old age, he never allowed himself to be overpowered by his ailments, physically or mentally. On the other hand, with his characteristically strict compliance with the prescribed medical regimen, he took control of the situation and ever remained the master, vigorously pursuing his activities while looking after his own health. Remaining calm and serene, poised and unperturbed, he always tried to lighten the burdens of all those who approached him with a heavy heart.

To all those who came into contact with him he was a friend, philosopher and guide. There was none among them who had not felt the effect of his healing touch, none who had not been moved by the qualities of his head and heart.

He had a soft corner for the underdog. He respected the lowliest of persons and highly valued their services. He publicly acknowledged the importance of the work of even the sweepers and cleaners who contributed in no small measure to the smooth working of society. He used to emphasise the fact that without these people and their work not only the comforts of our lives but our very existence would not be so pleasant or even possible. On occasions like Christmas and other festivals he used to extol their services and give individual gifts to them in appreciation of their services.

He put his heart and soul into whatever he did. Systematic, thorough and meticulous in his habits, he made a remarkable success of everything that he attempted to do. Deep thought and careful planning always preceded every project he undertook. No wonder he reaped nothing but success from all his ventures. Perfection was indeed the motto of his life.

Joseph Achen fought a good fight, kept the faith and finished his course. And when the appointed time came, he left this world in peace and tranquility, confident of receiving the crown of righteousness from the Lord, the righteous judge, whom he had served so loyally all his life. I believe that Joseph Achen must surely have heard the good Lord say to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

Joseph Achen. May people like him increase and make our world a little better and brighter.

M.I. Kuriakose

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KCJ AS A FAMILY MAN

KCJ was one of eight sons. His parents had had only primary school education but he was proud of them and believed that the combination of a wise and efficient father and a devout, unselfish and loving mother was a great blessing for the family. The brothers were very attached to, and supportive of, each other all through their lives.

Their father encouraged them to work occasionally in their paddy fields along with hired labourers in order to teach them the dignity of labour and to develop in them the right attitude to workers. They were also encouraged to help their mother in and around the house, including the kitchen. Theirs was not an affluent family but in the neighbourhood the boys were held up as models to emulate.

In his own family he showed that a father could be firm and strict as well as loving, caring, understanding and supportive. If he heard an altercation and raised voices in the kitchen area, he only had to call out the name of the offender in a stern voice from where he sat for the problem to be nipped in the bud and peace restored. But when a child went to him with an injured finger or toe, out came the first-aid kit with cotton, mercurochrome and bandages, along with soothing words and much tenderness.

KCJ treated peons, cooks and cleaners with regard, respect and gratitude. If he wanted something from the kitchen, he always went there to get it. So there was nothing that people who have worked for us — Chakikutty, Omana and Mohammad, the hostel boy, in Alwaye, Elphinesh in Addis Ababa and Rosily in Bangalore — would not do for him. When at home, he preferred to make his own mid-morning and early afternoon tea. I have often seen quizzical looks on the faces of visitors when he brought cups of tea on a tray for them!

He had a large circle of friends and loyal old students. When we were in Fiji for a conference in the 1970s, an old student of the Union Christian College, Alwaye, drove 120 miles just to see us. Another came to his rescue once when he was travelling from Bangalore to Alwaye by train and found that, during the night, someone had walked away with his suitcase, with his purse inside it! An old student, who happened to witness his predicament, gave him a hundred rupees and would not give him an address to which he could later return the money.

KCJ was frugal and careful about money but not calculating or mean. When he wished to resign his job with the World Council of Churches to go for training in counselling, Dr. Blake, the then General Secretary, who had a practical turn of mind, advised him to stay on for three more years so that he would be entitled to a pension. But he would not be persuaded because he was keen to undergo training immediately. For 20 years after that, in Vellore and in Bangalore, he was able to help a large number of people to sort out and solve their problems. He never took a fee.

A few days before he died, while going through the newspaper, I saw that the Swiss franc, which was worth just two rupees when we brought away whatever savings we had, was now equivalent to Rs. 27. When I brought the information to his attention, he pointed out that we had a house of our own and enough money to live on — what else did we need? As it happened, he died at home, on his own bed, in a matter of seven minutes, without even running up a hefty hospital bill.

As Secretary for Scholarships in the World Council of Churches, he had contacts with many wealthy Churches and Christian funding agencies in different parts of the world. He helped some worthwhile institutions in India, including the Kolancheri Hospital in Kerala and the Half-Way Home in Bangalore, to get funds from some of these. I am glad that he never used his contacts to wangle anything for himself or his family.

I used to think he was at times gullible. When someone I regarded as a glib go-getter got from him a letter of recommendation for a job, I would later remonstrate and remind him of the person's unsavoury antecedents. But he remained the eternal optimist who believed that people could change for the better. He was a very positive person, who just loved people. I have never heard him talk disparagingly of anyone.

He had 15 years of useful life after his first angina attack in 1978. I think of the period as a bonus. He would have hated to be confined to bed as a semi-invalid, dependent on others.

His grandchildren will miss him — for the pride he had in their scholastic, histrionic and other achievements, his deep affection and caring and the never-failing warmth with which he welcomed them to "249" (as they call our house).

Sometimes I can't help wishing we knew a little more about life after death. Are our departed ones aware of what is going on here? Then I remind myself that our Lord has said enough — that there are many mansions in his Father's house, that where He is, there we will be, too. That assurance should be enough for us. We can leave our departed loved ones in His care and try to live in such a way that one day "in God's house for ever more, our dwelling place shall be."

I would like to conclude with my favourite quotation on a Christian's death:

"I shall see God
I shall see Him with my own eyes
And He will not be a stranger."

Anna Joseph

* * * * *

PRAYER SAID AT APPACHEN'S GRAVE, CHRISTMAS 1993

Jesus said: let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.

Father of all, we pray to you for those whom we love but see no longer. As we stand here by his grave, we remember and pray for Appachen and thank you for what his life and example meant, not only to this family but also to numerous others – friends, students, relatives, as well as to those whom he helped through counselling. Though miss him, we know that he is safe in your presence from where he will continue to support us as we struggle with our problems and our decisions, just as he did while on earth, now perhaps with greater insight.

We pray for ourselves and for those of our family who are not with us today, that we might draw closer to God and develop his attitude of uncritical tolerance and acceptance of people as they are, and make the clear distinction between right and wrong that he made. We remember the generosity and large-heartedness that enabled him to give us the autonomy to lead our lives in our own way, supporting us through prayer and correspondence.

Father, one by one you are gathering your children into the world of light. We thank you for the gift of life here in this world and the promise of life in the world to come. We thank you for the explicit manner in which he assured us he was ready to go any time God called him and the painless way in which death came on the Feast of Transfiguration, the day he chose for his ordination. You are the God of the living and of the dead. May we, as a family, prove worthy of him, and live in such a way that we might finally join him where he has gone. Amen.

* * * * *

APPACHEN

The heartache and tears refuse to go away, and that sense of loss still lingers. But life goes on, and I find solace in the wealth of sweet memories and legacies left behind by Appachen.

I remember telling my maternal grandmother once, when I was a little girl, that my Appachen was the best father in the whole world — to which she replied, with an understanding smile, "That is probably true!" She was my trusted confidante and counsellor for as long as she lived, and I knew in what high regard she held Appachen, her son-in-law.

In fact, I didn't know a single person in my little world who didn't love Appachen. To me he was taller and handsomer than anybody else's father. He was so full of fun and laughter, all my friends adored him, and we were thrilled if he was around to tell us a joke or a story. He humoured us and made us laugh. The servants, the attenders and workers in the campus of the U.C. College, where we grew up, all loved him — for they were all touched by his great compassion and love.

Our summer holidays were spent in picturesque Kerala villages with our two sets of grandparents. Long, hot days were spent on the hillsides under sprawling trees or in the nearby river, where playmates and servants told innumerable stories of ghosts and spirits. Memories lingered even after we returned to our town-home, and I was always nervous about being alone in the dark! Appachen was my source of sympathy and comfort when it got too scary in the nights.

We loved gathering around to listen to him. He would tell us about the need for compassion and humility and love in our daily life. He would illustrate everything with vivid stories, which would be repeated, and we loved them each time! Appachen taught us about God's love. He taught us to trust and to love God. His was the life of a true Christian and he made it easy for us to understand the meaning of Christianity. He taught us by his own example the true meaning of ecumenism and secularism.

In our home, every member was respected. For instance, no one opened another's mail, and we always asked permission to use anything that belonged to another. There was sharing of chores and responsibilities and strict accountability. Ours was a tidy, well-organised household, thanks to Appachen. He couldn't stand chaos or confusion. Anything out of place was called "dirt!" Ammachy had to make various adjustments to her own style in order to suit his highly organised, systematic style.

Even as we grew up and went our own ways, Appachen's strong influence always remained with us. Our children loved being with him, and his influence has left many a lasting mark on them, too, for which I am grateful. I thank God for the privilege of having had a father like Appachen, and I live in the hope and belief that one day we will all be together, safe in the arms of Jesus.

Samu (Sarah Alexander John)

* * * * *

OUR FATHER

I had never experienced writers' block until I sat down — time and again over the past several months — to write this article about Appachen. I had never realised how difficult it is to write from the heart, instead of the mind. I know that I will never be able to express fully what Appachen meant to me. I don't think I will even be able to adequately portray Appachen as a father. But I will try my best, under the circumstances, to describe some of the qualities that made Appachen an extraordinary parent.

First of all, Appachen was a real **parent**, defying traditional concepts of the different roles that fathers and mothers are supposed to play in the family. He was by nature warm, gentle, kind, emotional and demonstrative. It was to him that we children would instinctively turn if we were hurt or sick or had bad dreams. He always knew how to make us feel better, safe and secure in his love.

He would bathe, dress and feed us quite routinely. Nurturing came naturally to him. I think he genuinely enjoyed this aspect of parenting because he was equally involved in caring for his grandchildren, right down to washing their bottoms. I remember the lullabys he used to sing to Rhea, my daughter, as he patted her to sleep when she was a baby. The last time she spent the night with him — just three days before he passed away — he was as solicitous as ever, making sure she ate properly, tucking her into bed and, as usual, drawing her blanket back over her whenever he woke up and found her uncovered.

He disregarded socially defined gender roles in other aspects of life, too. He had no inhibitions about entering the kitchen. In fact, as long as I can remember, it was he who always made coffee in the morning; he was very proud of his collection of coffee percolators. He thought nothing of making tea for himself and anyone else who happened to be around at the time. I think visitors to our home were often startled and a bit embarrassed when he popped into the kitchen and emerged with tea for them, but he saw nothing exceptional in his action.

What was wonderful was that all this came very naturally to him — it was not a pose, nor did it emerge from a conscious, intellectual decision. It was just the way he was. He always gave credit to his parents — simple, rural folk — for enabling him to develop in this way. He and his seven brothers (they had no sisters) used to help their beloved mother — a wonderfully gentle, loving, almost saintly little woman — in the kitchen, encouraged by their father, who looked every inch a formidable patriarch but was obviously a kind and considerate man.

Our family habit of eating an early dinner can also be traced back to Appen, our paternal grandfather. According to Appachen, his father always insisted on an evening routine designed to make life a little easier for the women of the family as well as the domestic help. As soon as the sun had set and the lamps were lit, the family would gather for evening prayers and then go straight in for dinner so that both the women and the servants would be free from domestic chores fairly early in the evening. Probably as a result of this childhood training, Appachen was always extremely considerate towards those who performed essential services, at home or at work, thereby earning the affection and loyalty of such workers everywhere he went.

As the youngest daughter, I was a bit of a father's pet and don't have the memories that my older sisters, Reebe and Samu, have of Appachen as a strict disciplinarian. According to them, his authoritative voice emanating from anywhere in the house had the power to stop them in their tracks if they were up to no good and he did, on occasion, use corporal punishment to teach them a lesson or two. However, they remember that he would always explain why he was punishing them. As a result, although the explanation did not necessarily reduce the physical sting of the punishment, they felt no rancour towards him.

The closest I came to corporal punishment at Appachen's hands was a light tap on the head as a warning against fidgeting during family prayer time. I guess he grew more indulgent with time and experience. Nevertheless, there was no question of even my disobeying Appachen; he expected strict adherence to the rules and routines of the household and he got it without much resistance. I think the secret of his success in enforcing discipline without being harsh was that he ruled by example; I don't think I have ever met anyone quite as self-disciplined and systematic as Appachen. Our acquiescence with his rules and regulations was also encouraged by the fact that they were by and large reasonable, based on logic as well as mutual respect and courtesy.

None of us has quite attained the high standards he set as an extremely disciplined, organised, methodical, systematic, meticulous, neat and tidy person, who always strove for excellence and perfection in everything he did, no matter how trivial. However, his example serves us all as a beacon, guiding us in our wavering pursuit of excellence. Of course, we have a long way to go in terms of the larger goal, but in small ways we continue of excellence. Of course, we have a long way to go in terms of the larger goal, but in small ways we continue with the good habits that he inculcated in us.

For example, I have now taught my daughter how to wrap her school books the way Appachen taught me — which, at least in the days when readymade covers were not available, was clearly the neatest way. Thanks to his constant reminders, none of us can ever leave our plates in the washing sink without first scraping off waste matter into the garbage bin. And that waste is generally minimal because of his insistence that several small helpings were preferable to one that was too large to finish.

He took great pride in leaving his plate almost clean at the end of a meal, with non-edible matter piled neatly in one corner. He would show us how clean the palm of his hand was even after eating because he would use only his fingers to mix the food and take it to his mouth. When we went abroad, he taught us the correct way to use cutlery, the proper way to tilt the soup plate, and so on (he had learnt all about Western etiquette in Canada, where he went to do his PhD, before I was born).

While he helped us to adapt easily to life in foreign countries through such basic training, he also showed us by example how to establish our dignity as individuals and as Indians in alien lands, and encouraged us to hold on to important aspects of our own culture and beliefs wherever in the world we found ourselves. For example, although I was transported to Ethiopia before I turned seven and lived abroad with my parents till I was 16, Appachen ensured that I retained at least basic literacy in our mother tongue by making me copy psalms in Malayalam every Saturday morning.

I think he was able to be himself wherever he was and in any company because he was a supremely self-confident man. He was secure in the knowledge of who he was and could therefore accept others for what they were. His self-image was not easily threatened and this left him free to follow his conscience throughout his life without paying much attention to meaningless conventions and social barriers. He did not have an iota of snobbery in him; he was also totally unself-conscious. What's more, his own self-confidence and self-esteem did not manifest itself in aggression or domination; in fact, he went out of his way to help build up the self-confidence of others.

He certainly did a lot to nurture our self-confidence as individuals and as members of the female gender. Today, when I am both personally and professionally concerned about the self-image and self-esteem of girls and women, I remember with great appreciation the myriad ways in which Appachen helped us to become confident, independent persons with no sense of inferiority on account of our gender or anything else. I still remember how he would always reassure me that my overweight was nothing but puppy fat (long after I had ceased to be a puppy!). It was clear he had absolutely no regrets about having three daughters and no son. He used to proudly call himself the president of his Y.W.C.A.

He always encouraged us to think for ourselves and to act independently. He was quick with praise and measured in his criticism, which was always constructive rather than destructive. Even our most trivial achievements were greeted with enthusiasm and applause. In fact, he often embarrassed us by telling all and sundry about our tiniest triumphs. His grandchildren, too, basked in the love and appreciation with which he enveloped them.

Appachen was equally appreciative of people outside the family. I remember how he always made it a point to praise his hostess and/or the cook for a good meal, to make a positive comment about people's appearance and/or attire, to somehow find something good to say to and/or about everyone he came across without being dishonest. He always saw the best in people; sometimes this made him gullible, but that did not deter him from his determination to be positive about life and all that he encountered in its course.

He was always around to provide moral and practical support to us during times of trouble. Even if our problems were self-made or rooted in something he had advised us against, he never once said, "I told you so." I cannot think of a more sterling quality in a parent — other than the capacity to give love unconditionally, which was another of his invaluable traits.

I suppose both qualities were off-shoots of his positive attitude to life. He saw a silver lining behind every cloud and never let anything embitter him. He truly believed that everything happened for the best and that our task was to accept, if not fully understand, the often mysterious ways in which God works in our lives.

Appachen's faith in God was total. His devotion to Jesus Christ was palpable. He always said that God had always taken care of him and that Jesus had always been a true friend to him. That faith and devotion stood him in good stead till the very end (I still can't get over the fact that he passed away on the 39th anniversary of his ordination as a priest and, according to Ammachy, almost at the same time that the ordination service began!). He was also extremely committed to the Church.

However, as I see it, his religious faith, devotion and loyalty did not make him a blind believer. A thoughtful and knowledgeable, yet devout, Christian, he was able to separate the wheat from the chaff. He was not afraid to question tradition even in matters of religion. Principle was more important to him than convention.

For example, I remember being inspired, as a child, by his explanation of the reason why he chose not to grow the customary priestly beard even though it would have been much more convenient for him, with his thick growth of hair, to avoid the burden of a daily shave (sometimes two): he did not see how a beard was integral to the priestly function and he felt that many young men would be put off priesthood if it entailed too many such unnecessary trappings. To me, now, his refusal to grow a beard (which he actually defended in a pamphlet!) — inconsequential as it may seem — was a symbol of his principled resistance to the tendency of tradition to override religion.

He extended to us the freedom to think seriously about matters of religion. He did not mind if this led us to question certain things and to express different, even unorthodox, views. On the rare occasions when I wrote somewhat controversial articles in the mainstream press on subjects related to religion, he circulated them in Christian circles (occasionally sending them for reproduction in Christian publications) to encourage debate on what he also believed were important issues. His affirmation — as a parent, a priest and a theological scholar — of my right to exercise my critical faculties even in matters that could be considered somewhat out of my ken was typically empowering.

Although he gave us all a firm grounding in the Christian faith and the Orthodox tradition throughout our childhood — with daily prayers at home, regular church-going on Sundays and festival days, observation of lent, and so on — once we had grown up he never questioned our individual ways of keeping the faith. He was happy if we accompanied him to church, but he did not insist upon it. A firm believer in ecumenism, he did not have any objection to our attending services in non-Orthodox churches. By providing us with that space, despite the possibility of gossip and criticism, he ensured that we remained true — in our own ways — to the faith in which he had raised us.

Till the end he remained open to new ideas and concerned about what was happening in our country and the world. One of the last public functions to which he went with me, in June 1993, was a public meeting on communalism, where — if I remember correctly — he even bought a book, to add to his extensive collection. In July 1993 he gave me a book, "The Song of the Bird," by Anthony de Mello, S.J., a collection of delightful stories from different religious and mystical traditions, which he thought might be useful to me both personally and professionally.

Till the end he remained enthusiastic about everything. He was always cheerful, always game for anything. He found pleasure in simple things. I remember his child-like delight when the Bangalore Transport Service introduced bus passes for senior citizens (he didn't live to hear about the 50 per cent discount for senior citizens on domestic air tickets, although I'm not sure he would have used that because he loved his buses and trains — second class sleeper)! He loved going out, browsing in bookshops, eating out, treating his grandchildren to ice-cream or simply exchanging pleasantries with passers-by as he sat by the gate to his house of an evening. He was never bored; he never tired of watching people and the world go by. When we chafed at his insistence on getting to railway stations and airports long before the scheduled time of arrival or departure, he would explain his logic — that it was best to be early to avoid anxiety and rule out last-minute obstacles and delays — and wonder at our impatience when there was so much to be observed while waiting.

He was always interested in people and never failed to welcome them into the warm circle of his love. My husband, Vasudev, and son, Bharani, were instantly adopted into the family. Vasu recalls with appreciation and affection the many ways in which Appachen made

them both feel loved and at home. His only regret is that he did not have a longer acquaintance with Appachen; he always says he could have learnt so much from him.

Even though his once-strapping body had grown old over the years and his bright and lively mind had slowed down considerably in the last year or so, Appachen never lost his zest for life. Yet, despite our protests and attempts at persuasion, he steadfastly refused any invasive treatment of his heart condition after it had clearly gone beyond the stage where he could manage it, as he had for 15 years, through disciplined living and regular medication. While he was willing to adjust his lifestyle, even to the extent of giving up his long evening walks, and to take any amount of medication, he was firm in his resolve not to undergo surgery in order to extend his life.

He said, "I have lived a good life and I am ready to go whenever the Lord calls me." His stubborn refusal of more intensive treatment was frustrating to us at the time, especially considering that he had an exceptionally gifted cardio-thoracic surgeon, then based in Bangalore, for a son-in-law. But, in hindsight, it was clearly a wise and courageous decision which could only have been made by a person who was confident about having lived a righteous life and consequently had no fear of death.

Now that I have got started, I could write reams about Appachen and how he prepared us for life. The memories come tumbling out and much remains to be said. However, suffice it to say that in the end Appachen's most enduring and endearing quality was his essential humanity. It was indeed a privilege to have been his daughter. I wish I had told him so before he left.

Ammu Joseph

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TRIBUTES TO A GRANDFATHER

"Your methodical approach to life is one that I have made my own. I try to apply the same type of self-discipline and orderliness in everything that I do. As anyone who has worked with me will tell you, my capacity for being organised can be downright annoying. Although I don't quite have your sense of selfless service and hospitality, it will always be one of my goals to obtain it..."

Ravee Kurian

(excerpted from a letter received from Boston a week before KCJ passed away; Ravee was his eldest grandchild)

* * *

"I have, in a sense, `released' Appachen and I feel so safe thinking about his happiness. At the same time I want him to be still around gracing the 249 gate when I come to visit.

"I so, so appreciate the prayer for travel blessings that he used to say when anyone left for a journey. I still carry around the strong thoughts he gave me when I left in December. I hope he got the letter I sent telling him that I got an `A' for Philosophy of Religion. He had recommended the author I did my research from. I shall miss the connection with the past that I felt through Appachen and much more; and I am holding on ever more dearly to the values and memories he gave me."

Ansu Anna John

(excerpted from a letter received from St. Paul, Minnesota, after KCJ's death; Ansu was his eldest grand-daughter)

* * *

"I just want to say that you have been a great influence on my life. Ever since I was small, the discipline that was enforced in 249 helped me to grow up as a better person. I have found many lessons taught by you at 249 useful in practical life. In college I am known as Joseph, not Ranjeet. I have always wanted to be called Joseph, my baptismal name.

"The values that you have instilled in me have been important to me and I shall cherish them. Like you, I am careful with money. I have files for all my papers and keep them in an orderly way as you do. All these seemingly small things I learned from you have helped me to manage in the United States as a mature adult. I want to thank you for everything. Take care of yourself."

Ranjeet Joseph Kurian

(excerpted from a letter received a month before KCJ's death; Ranjeet was his second grandson, godson and namesake, in whose arms he breathed his last)

* * *

I REMEMBER ...

I remember my grandfather. I called him Appachen. He looked like ... a grandfather. He had white hair and was clean-shaven. He lived in Bangalore (where I now live) in a cream-coloured house.

I remember going for walks with Appachen. He never failed to go out for a walk in the evening. Sometimes we'd go to a park and he'd sit there for a while, while I played. Often, we'd go to visit someone. Whenever we went out for a walk, people would call out greetings to Appachen. It seemed to me that the whole world knew him.

I remember meal times with Appachen. He always told me how good vegetables are for me. I always refused to eat any fruit after lunch or dinner. Appachen would then say to me, "See how I eat this banana?" And he would show me how he ate it.

I remember Appachen's favourite joke. Say, I was eating a carrot. He would say, "Carrots are good for your eyes." And if I asked how he knew, he'd say, "Have you ever seen a rabbit wearing glasses?"

I remember how patient Appachen was. Once, he and I were taking my dog for a walk. We stopped to talk to someone on the way. My dog was still a puppy at that time. He peed on my grandfather's trousers. But all Appachen said was, "It's all right. I was going to change anyway."

I remember spending the night in Appachen's cream house. I always slept in his room. Every night, before I slept, he made me say my prayers. I remember repeating all the things he said. Now I don't feel secure at night without saying my prayers and I know that God and my grandfather are looking out for me.

Rhea Saran

(written in 1994, a year after KCJ's death; Rhea was his youngest grandchild)

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GRANDFATHER AGAINST THE WILD FOXES

Today I saw
two little girls and a
bright grandfather - his eyes shone like fires down his life
and his walk only beginning to show
the comfortable sag of oldness–
One straighthaired and jumpy,
One curly, close by his hand.

They walk at the pace of
the little curly one
away from the large white house tinged
with golden tired sunshine,
on a hot evening trailing a hot day,
after tea and rusk. Sometimes when
I've returned
behind shut eyes, I might be there at exactly
that time.

To return, to my awe of the cycle of the many days like
that same one, when
the evening begins to close in, just after
the raging, uncompromising, unforgiving
heat of the day,
all errands, all promised walks, all treats, all visits,
at that hour that slips away faster
than noon nap droning on, faster
into the wild black night.

The girl children sway with the tall
swaying grass in the wind
and the wind carries the bleating horns from
the lorries on the main road
driving into the distance, at the rocky Vellore hills,
far behind the wall topped with glass pieces
and the twisted tree
strangely alive now, unlike in
the flatness of the bleaching sun.

In the air there is an emotion from
the rhythms of the village temple songs
that entreat and cry and threaten
but the Grandfather will hold those luring fears
at bay.
He is their love, their joy, for him they can
skip and show off the songs they know
He will humour them, and not get impatient.

The redder ball in the sky is dropping, looming
over the tall grass, and the faint smell of dust comes blowing
as the grass rolls like the ocean, washing
and reaching for the little girls.
They are afraid. And grandfather says, poking about
in the grass with his walking stick,
"If there's a fox in here, I'll
get him with my stick before he gets you, hey hey!"

And the three continue on.

Ansu A. John
(Memories of childhood days in Vellore)

THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN INDIA

Away in the south-west corner of the peninsula of India there is a community known as the Syrian Christians of Malabar. One of the unique things about them that a foreigner observes is the dress their women wear at home. In inventing a costume for their women, these people, unlike almost every other community in the world, seem to have thought not of bringing into relief, but of hiding successfully, every charm of the feminine figure. This, by the way, is not the graceful Indian sari which most young women wear now even among Syrian Christians! Clad from neck to heels in immaculate white, the women of this community have a quiet dignity and self-possession calculated to inspire an almost unnatural reserve in the relations between the sexes. Cousins up to the sixth remove are "brothers" or "sisters" to them. And marriage is not to be thought of until the next branch is reached in the family tree. At any rate, it used to be so until about a generation ago. In the modern world, even the Syrian Christians have had to change!

The first fully authenticated historical reference to this community is to be found in a book entitled, "Universal Christian Topography," written in Greek by one Cosmas, a Greek merchant from Alexandria. Among a number of other interesting things, this book refers to the existence of the Church in India when he visited it about the year 522 A.D. Some references in the writings of St. Clement of Alexandria seem to prove the tradition that his master, Pataenus, the head of the famous Alexandria Theological School, had visited the Church in India in 189 A.D. And found there a copy of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. There are references, most probably to this Church in India, in several other early documents, like the writings of Eusebius, the great church historian who died in 338 A.D., of St. Jerome (cir. 300 A.D.), of St. Gregory Naziansen (cir. 370-90 A.D.), of St. Chrysostom (347-407A.D.), the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 883 A.D., etc., in addition to some early Syriac works like, "The Acts of Judas Thomas," perhaps written between 180 and 230 A.D. and the hymns of Ephriam Syrus (cir. 363-373 A.D.), etc.

The tradition is that the Church was founded by the Apostle Thomas about the year 52 A.D. Habban, an Indian merchant, found the Apostle Thomas, who was a carpenter, and took him to the Indian King, Gudnaphar, who employed the Apostle to build a palace for himself. Thomas, instead of spending the large sum of money he received from the king on the construction of a palace, gave it all away for the benefit of the poor and told the king that a palace was being built for him. When the king discovered what had happened to his money he naturally got angry and put Thomas into prison. Following this, the king's brother fell ill, and in a trance he had a vision of heaven where he saw the wonderful palace Thomas had built. This opened the king's eyes to what had really happened and he soon became a Christian. Thomas was then free to preach the Gospel throughout the kingdom. After making a number of converts on the west coast of India (Malabar) and appointing two presbyters there, the Apostle went to the east coast, and there he died at the hands of Brahmin priests at Mylapore (Madras). There are still two shrines in Madras sacred to the Apostle Thomas's name. The above tradition is so deeply embedded in the folklore of the Syrian Christians that, for want of any historical proofs against its authenticity, modern historians are inclined to credit it.

This community of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar received a notable accession to their numerical strength when, about the year 345 A.D., some 400 families of Christians from Syria, running away from the anti-Christian persecutions of the Persian Empire, were led to Malabar by a Syrian merchant, Thomas of Cana. Whether it was this first body of Syrian immigrants, or a later and perhaps larger body of immigrants from Syria who came to Malabar cir. 825 A.D. under a Persian merchant, Sabriso, which gave the name Syrian Christian to the Church in Malabar, can never be finally ascertained. But it is definitely known that from 878 A.D. onwards the Syrian Christians enjoyed some special privileges in Malabar. Of the two sets of copper plates on which these special charters were granted to the Syrian Christians by Ayyan, King of Venad (part of Malabar), five are still extant.

We do not know much about the history of the Syrian Church till the 10th Century, except that at some stage she had some connection with the Nestorian Church in Babylonia. One small section of the Syrian Christians are Nestorian, at present known as the Chaldean Syrian Church.

The Liturgy used by the Syrian Church of Malabar in those days might have been a version of the East Syrian Liturgy of Addai and Mari. Unfortunately, not a single copy of the text of those days has come down to present times. Apparently every single copy was destroyed by the Portuguese after the Synod of Diamper to be mentioned

hereafter. What is known as the Liturgy of Malabar is a hypothetical reconstruction of what it might have been, as judged by copious references to it in the decrees of the Synod of Diamper. The version of the Liturgy of Addai and Mari which the Chaldean Syrian Church of Malabar uses nowadays is the same as that used by the Assyrian Church in Mesopotamia from where it came in after years.

In the 16th Century, the Roman influence came to Malabar with the Portuguese, and the clever manoeuvres of the Jesuits and Archbishop Menezes led the Syrian Church to accept Papal supremacy at the Synod of Diamper in 1599. This, however, was so much against the genius of the Syrian Church that the bulk of the community repudiated this decision in 1653 and, standing around the famous "Coonen" Cross at Mattanchary, they took a vow never to have anything to do with the Pope. A minority, however, continued to be loyal to the Pope, and they gradually developed into the present Roman Catholic section of the Syrian Church. Those who repudiated Roman rule turned to the West Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch for Episcopal connection. The Syrian version of the Liturgy of St. James came to Malabar with bishops from the Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch, from where also came the nickname, Jacobite Church, by which the Syrian Orthodox Church in Malabar came to be known during the subsequent centuries.

The next schism in the main body of the Syrian Church of Malabar arose as one of the unfortunate results of the coming of the missionaries sent out by the Evangelical section of the Church of England early in the 19th Century. These missionaries came with very good intentions, and they did indeed bring to the Church a much needed challenge regarding its evangelical and pastoral responsibilities. They did a great deal of good to the Church, especially on the educational side, but their Protestant training made it impossible for them to appreciate the specifically Orthodox teaching and practices of the Church, like prayers for the faithful departed and the emphasis on the Sacraments. Under their influence, a small section broke off and formed an Anglican Communion, while a larger section – about one fourth of the Church - broke off and called itself first "The Reformed Syrian Church" and later on "The Mar Thoma Syrian Church."

The main body of the Church continued to be faithful to the traditional Orthodox faith and practices, which it shares with the other Eastern Orthodox Communions described, for example, in a book like "The Eastern Orthodox Church" by Stefan Zankov (S.C.M Press). But the schisms seriously affected the vitality of the Syrian Orthodox Church and she is only gradually recovering from the setback.

About the year 1930, internal troubles in the Syrian Orthodox Church led one of its bishops to secede and to establish a uniate Church under the Pope of Rome. This uniate Church, referred to as the Syrian Malankarese Rite to distinguish it from the older Romo-Syrian Church of Malabar referred to earlier, has retained most of the liturgical and ritual practices of the Syrian Orthodox Church while, at the same time, being subject to the Papal discipline. It has followed a vigorous proselytizing policy and, with fresh recruits not only from the Orthodox section but also from other sections of the Syrian Community, has grown into a considerable ecclesiastical body.

The Anglican section of the Syrian Community is now part of the Church of South India. Attempts to bring together the Orthodox section and the Mar Thoma section of the Syrian Church, which began with the foundation of the Union Christian College in 1921, have not yet borne the expected fruit. But it is hoped that, as the Orthodox Church imbibes more of the evangelical fervour of the Mar Thoma Church, and the Mar Thoma Church accepts more of the Orthodox faith and practices of the older tradition, a way will be opened for these two sections to come together again. In the mean time, both are member churches of the World Council of Churches.

(Written for a Dutch Church Magazine)

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THE ORTHODOX ETHOS

Recently a friend of mine brought to my notice the rather casual reference to "the Orthodox Ethos" in certain articles and reports of public speeches by some members of the Syrian Orthodox community in Kerala. The discussion that followed highlighted the need for a clearer understanding of this concept than was apparent in those vague references. What exactly is the Orthodox Ethos which, according to the speakers and writers, is to be distinguished from the Catholic Ethos and the Protestant Ethos?

The Oxford Dictionary defines ethos as "characteristics of a community or of a racial culture" or "code of values by which a group or society lives." Are there some common characteristics or accepted code of values by which the Syrian Orthodox community of Kerala can be distinguished from other communities in India or elsewhere? What are these common characteristics or generally accepted code of values in the Orthodox community of Kerala? This is really worth thinking about.

The writers and the speakers who have referred to the Orthodox Ethos are likely to point out that they were not thinking of the Syrian Orthodox community of Kerala in isolation, but that they were thinking of Orthodoxy in general as a major constituent of the Universal Christian Church, the other two constituents being broadly Catholicism and Protestantism. They might add further that Orthodoxy (with a capital 'O' to differentiate it from orthodoxy with a small 'o' which is only a variant of conservatism) has some characteristics that distinguish it from both Catholicism and Protestantism. So, the question again is, what are these characteristics and where do we find them?

Broadly speaking, both Catholicism and Protestantism tend to give greater emphasis to rational and logical conceptualizations in religion than Orthodoxy, which gives greater recognition to nonrational aspects of religious experience. Persons who are too logical to be patient with what they consider the Orthodox obsession with mystery in religious matters sometimes feel driven to say that Orthodoxy is mere obscurantism, often reinforced by obstinacy! However, those who observe things more carefully can see that, wherever there is genuine Orthodox religious experience, it produces a character that is remarkably attractive. Where Orthodoxy has not degenerated into fanatic dogmatism, it fosters a lovable way of life. What is the secret of this?

It has been said that Catholicism considers pride as the basic sin and therefore prescribes obedience as the main antidote to sin; and that Protestantism regards moral irresponsibility as the greater cause of human degradation and therefore tends to emphasize individual freedom and initiative more than anything else in the practice of religion. Corresponding to these affirmations of Catholicism and Protestantism, the basic impulse in Orthodoxy has been the attitude of reverence in response to the mystery of God, the mystery of human life, and the mystery of salvation. Historically this has led not only to the description of the sacraments as 'mysteries,' but also to a preoccupation with worship in religious life, almost to the virtual exclusion of other Christian obligations like the practical works of mercy bringing humanitarian compassion to the needy.

It is also to be noted that, unfortunately, very often the inner reality has been lost sight of and worship has degenerated into mere flourish of language and elaboration of ceremonial and ritual. Likewise, very often the concept of mystery has practically converted the sacraments into little more than 'magical' performances that call for no moral responses. Nevertheless, where the inner reality has been diligently kept alive, Orthodox religious life has been noted for its cultivation of reverence, which is the basic element in the Orthodox Ethos.

Reverence is fundamentally an attitude of mind, and it is not restricted to any particular pattern of external behaviour. For example, a parent who firmly insists on a child doing something that has to be done can at the same time continue to have reverence for that child, or a bishop whose palm a layman kisses as a mark of respect can continue to treat that layman with reverence. Mutual reverence is basic to the Orthodox conception of Christian social behaviour. The source of reverence is the sense of wonder at the unspeakable graciousness of God in valuing each one of His creations. The spiritual reality of any act of worship may be gauged by the depth of reverence it fosters in the worshipper. When we talk about the Orthodox Ethos, it will be good to remember some of these things. Is basic reverence a reality in our response not only to God but also to our fellow human beings?

EPISCOPACY IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

After more than half a century of litigation and division, the Orthodox Church in India is once again united. A Catholicos, consecrated by a reigning Patriarch of Antioch, and accepted by all sections of the people, symbolizes progress for the Church. It is good that at this time there should be a general review of the various aspects of Church life. Only thus can intelligent adjustments be made in order to advance the integration of modern man and society with the life of the Church.

Everywhere one goes one hears talk about the various organs of authority in the Church. In some quarters, it is openly claimed that because the Orthodox Church is episcopal all authority is vested in the bishops and that other persons or bodies in the church have authority only to the extent that such authority is delegated to them by bishops. In justification of this claim, the oft-quoted saying of the great St. Ignatius that "where the bishop is, there is the Church" is used in season and out of season. It is true that St. Ignatius had a very clear conception of the role of the bishop in the Church. But to understand him rightly, the background of his epistles should be kept steadily in view. He lived and thought and wrote as the Pastor of a Church under persecution, to console and strengthen people whose loyalty to Christ was being tested in the crucible of persecution. If he asked those harrowed Christians to preserve their integrity by sticking close to their bishops, who were themselves the victims of the most brutal persecution, his words were surely not meant to support the authoritarian claims of individuals whose thinking is dominated by the struggle for power in the secular world.

Episcopacy does not mean the same thing to all people. There are different shades of meaning applied by different people to this much-abused word, episcopacy. Of course, episcopacy means some kind of overseership or supervision. A High Court judge has a very definite overseership in the maintenance of law in a country. But his authority is different from that of the Inspector-General of Police or the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. This is not to suggest that the position of the bishop is the same as either that of the judge or that of the Inspector-General. It is really different from both. In fact, it has no exact analogy in the secular world and much of our misunderstanding of episcopacy is the result of a confusion on this point.

Scholars are generally agreed at present that the origin of the various orders in the Church is fundamentally liturgical and not administrative. The liturgy brought all Christians into the unity of the Body of Christ. The different parts played in the performance of the liturgy by the different sections of the Church led to their organisation as different orders in the Church. In this connection, one hopes that, in this second half of the 20th Century, it is not necessary to argue out the point that the laity are an order of the Church, just as much as, and just as important as, the other three orders of bishops, priests and deacons. The Church is a Divine Society in which love is, or is meant to be, the law of life. And in the Divine Society, the basic principles enunciated by its Lord and Master cannot be superseded by any considerations of expediency or worldly wisdom. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise authority over them; but it shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you, let him be your servant... Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." (Matt 20:25-28)

The importance of the bishops is that they are the custodians of the Sacraments of the Church and that it is through them that Sacramental Grace is distributed to all the members of the Church. In this connection, it should be remembered that Sacraments are the means in and through which God's Grace is communicated. To use these means of Grace as means of establishing authority would be to prostitute them.

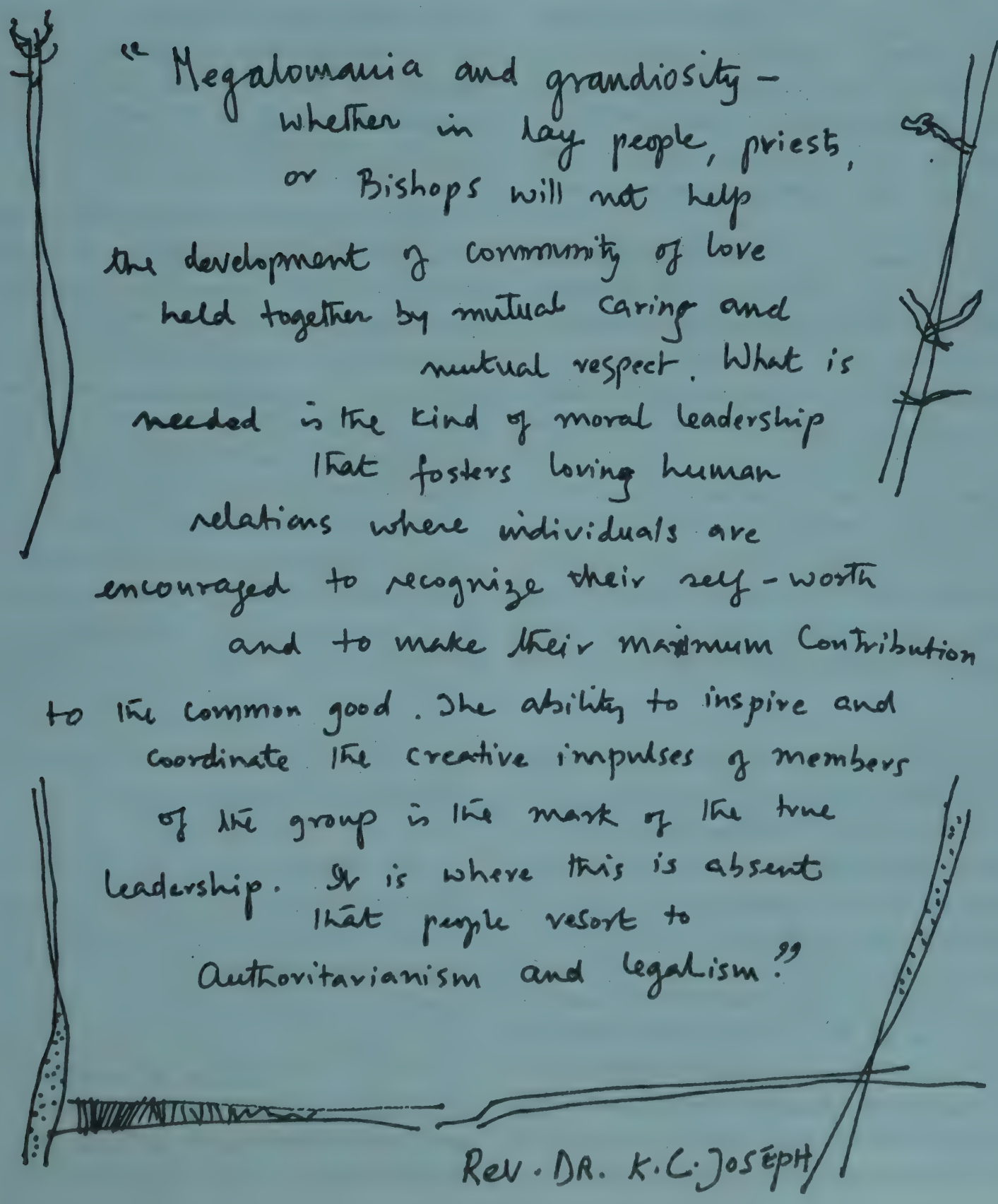
In the course of history, two types of episcopacy have evolved in the Christian Church. For want of more suitable terms to distinguish these two types, perhaps we may refer to them as the Monarchical type and the Pastoral type. The Monarchical type episcopacy is conceived of in terms of administrative authority. Legal acumen, executive efficiency and tact are the qualities primarily needed in a person to succeed as a bishop of this type. The pastoral type of episcopacy, on the other hand, is thought of in terms of holiness, spiritual insight, sensitivity to the spiritual and material needs of others and general wisdom to guide without ruling. To anyone who has studied the history of the Church carefully, it should be clear that, by and large, the great bishops of the Orthodox Churches belonged to the second category. Jacobus Baradaeus, after whom the Syrian Christians are sometimes referred to as "Jacobites," was certainly a bishop of the second type. Clad in beggars' clothes (which brought him the nickname "Baradaeus"), he travelled throughout the Middle East and exhorted his flock to be faithful. It is doubtful whether any thoughts of

"ruling" them ever occurred to him.

A bishop is to be a Father in Christ to his people. We know of two types of fathers in our society. The first type keeps all the property and other symbols of authority in his hands till he dies and expects his children to "obey" him in everything. He is afraid to be "dependent" on his children. But there is the other type of father who divides his property among his children as soon as he can and delights to see them taking managerial responsibility. He is always willing to advise them if they need it, but he is more happy if they can manage things well without his advice. He is not afraid to be "dependent" on his children.

Mutual love is the binding force in this second type of family, whereas mutual fear is the binding force in the first type. A father is taking a great risk in the second type of family. The first type does not want to risk failure and thinks that he had better make sure that everything is under control only to discover when it is too late that he has been clutching at the shell while the substance had slipped through his fingers unnoticed!

Now, which type of father do we want? Which type of father would our Fathers in Christ like to be?


"Megalomania and grandiosity – whether in lay people, priests, or Bishops will not help the development of community of love held together by mutual caring and mutual respect. What is needed is the kind of moral leadership that fosters loving human relations where individuals are encouraged to recognize their self-worth and to make their maximum Contribution to the common good. The ability to inspire and coordinate the creative impulses of members of the group is the mark of the true leadership. It is where this is absent that people resort to Authoritarianism and legalism!"
Rev. DR. K.C. JOSEPH

THE LAITY'S PARTICIPATION IN ORTHODOX CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Administration is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, and therefore the purpose for which a body exists should determine the principles of its administration. We should start with a consideration of the nature and function of the Church.

The Church is meant to be the Body of Christ - an extension of the incarnation. To put it in other words, the Church is the sphere in which the saving grace of God is communicated to men and women and where they are trained to grow as members of a community of love. It is as sinful but forgiven individuals that every member of the Church should be regarded, irrespective of his position. Authority in the Church, therefore, is to be clearly differentiated from authority in the state or in 'the world' (cf. St. Mark 10:42-44). The different offices of the Church should be thought of in terms of 'function' and 'responsibility' rather than in terms of power or authority.

The Orthodox Church is organised according to the Episcopal System. As St. Ignatius put it, the Church is where the faithful are gathered around their bishop. To understand St. Ignatius rightly, the background of the Epistles has to be kept in view. St. Ignatius lived and taught and wrote his Epistles as the pastor of a church under persecution, to console and strengthen people whose loyalty to Christ was being tested in the crucible of suffering inflicted by enemies of the gospel. When he asked those harrowed Christians to preserve their unity by keeping close to their bishops, who were themselves under persecution, his words were surely not meant to support any authoritarian claims of individuals who wanted power over others.

In traditional Roman usage, Episcopacy came to mean something rather different from what St. Ignatius had in mind. Monarchical episcopacy is different from Pastoral Episcopacy where the bishop is not the monarch or ruler, but the shepherd or father of the people. The bishop is counsellor and guide rather than magistrate, and rules by consent rather than by fear. The Roman promotion of episcopal autocracy inevitably led to the growth of Congregationalism in the West. The Orthodox Churches did not pass through this kind of revolution because the Orthodox episcopal system was not incompatible with some of the values which Congregationalism arose to conserve, and which the old Roman episcopal system did not permit. Even Rome is beginning to recognize this and make adjustments.

The Orthodox system of Church government is based on what may be called "the mind of the community," which depends neither on the 'infallibility' of any person or any section of the Church nor on a democratic vote. Dictatorship, and 'majority rule,' are both alien to the spirit of Orthodox Church administration. It is a perversion of ecclesiological concepts to teach or act as if 'conciliarity' or 'synodicality' means that the episcopal synod has some kind of infallibility or stands above any need for correction by the whole body of the Church. If St. Irenaeus believed that the best guarantee of 'apostolic' faith would be the bishop in the 'apostolic succession,' he surely did not ever imagine that the laying on of hands would make any bishop infallible in all matters of Church life!

In the Church the bishops have an honoured place because they are the custodians of sacramental grace, but they are not the whole church and their authority is not meant to be dictatorial. The clergy have a special position in the life of the Church because they are the instruments through whom sacramental grace is conveyed to all members of Church, but they are only a section of the Church and cannot be treated as the whole. The Laity are the most numerous element in the Church; they are, in fact, the Church in its relation to the world, and on the Laity will depend the impact of the Church on the world. Nevertheless, the Laity, too, must be subject to 'the mind of the whole community.' The point is that no section of the Church should arrogate to itself exclusively the authority of the Church. All sections should have a share in this authority and every separate section should be subject to the authority of the whole. This is the basic principle of Orthodox government.

The question is how this Orthodox conception of Church Government can be worked out in actual practice in the world. It should be stated at the outset that the Orthodox emphasis on the 'mind of the community' is not meant to paralyse quick and effective action in circumstances where such action is necessary and warranted. For example, in cases which call for the application of rules established by the 'mind of the community,' the particular person or group entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the rules ought to, and

can, act quickly and effectively. The point is that in matters of policy and decisions affecting the life of the whole community, 'the mind of the community,' made up under the leading of the living Holy Spirit of God, is the only safe guide for the Church.

'The mind of the community' in practice means virtual (as different from formal) unanimity or consensus. But it is rationally undefinable and seeks to comprehend the non-rational element in the human personality. Here it is worth remembering that 'the mind of the community' is not always the sum total of the minds of the separate individuals who compose it but an undefinable and at the same time very real entity. The 'autocratic' system of Rome and the 'democratic' systems of Protestantism, are alike based on rational principles and they satisfy, in their own several ways, the rational element in man. But they seem alike to ignore the non-rational aspect of the human personality, which refuses to be controlled by logical formulae. The Orthodox system does not appeal to the rationalist mind, but it seems to offer greater scope for the Holy Spirit of God (which bloweth where it listeth) to guide the truly devout in the ways of truth, although it must be confessed that it leads to anarchy and confusion the moment the true spirit of Christian love and humility disappears from the community. It seems very necessary that this should be taken into account whenever 'safeguards' are tried to make the Orthodox system more rational.

The practical decisions that the Church has to take come under two different categories: (a) Decisions to be made by, and for, the parish or the local congregation, and (b) Decisions to be made by, and for, the whole Church. In this connection it should be remembered that the Orthodox Church leaves each parish or local congregation a great deal of autonomy to take decisions affecting its own life and property. It is only in matters of doctrine, the practice of the sacraments, and the general spiritual discipline of the Church, like questions of fasting, the calendar of festivals, etc., that the parish normally comes under the control of the Church centre. Centralization is kept to a minimum in the administration of the Orthodox Churches.

With regard to decisions to be made by, and for, the parish or the local congregation, the Orthodox practice is to have all the adult male members of the congregation meet together under the chairmanship of the vicar or the bishop if he is present, and to discuss the questions at issue until decisions are arrived at by consensus. It is to be considered whether adult women members of the parish also should not be brought into this position of responsibility. The democratic rule of 'decision by majority' has not been the Orthodox practice. An odd individual here and there may be ignored; but it is not the Orthodox practice to overrule the opposition of a minority which prevents the formation of a consensus. Such opposition by a minority is accepted by an Orthodox congregation as a call to explore the matter further until new light is thrown on the question at issue which may lead to a consensus later on. Neither a Bishop nor a clergyman normally vetoes a decision arrived at by a congregation in the above manner.

With regard to decisions to be made by and for the whole Church, the Orthodox practice is for all the bishops to meet together with representatives from every parish or local congregation. Each parish or local congregation may be represented in the general Church Assembly by a team of three, consisting of one priest and two laymen, all elected by consensus by each parish or local congregation at the meeting of its general membership.

In a Church like the Syrian Orthodox Church, with such a large number of dioceses and parishes, such a representative body of the whole Church is bound to consist of an unwieldy number of individuals. Therefore, it would be necessary to consider ways of having a representative body for the whole Church, consisting of not more than, say, three to five hundred persons.

The way to do so would be to have representative assemblies for each of the archdioceses, consisting of representatives from each parish, and then to elect a specific number of representatives of each archdiocese assembly to the assembly of the whole Church.

By careful allocation of seats, it should be possible to have a certain agreed proportion of laymen and clergymen on all these representative bodies.

The point is that the voice of laymen and ordinary parish priests should be heard in all matters affecting the life of the Church, including faith and practices.

In practice, questions of faith and order may be normally left to the decision of the Episcopal Synod, and questions affecting property and financial matters may be normally left to a committee of laymen and ordinary clergymen in the parish, diocese, archdiocese or the Church as a whole. Administrative action may be initiated by any section of the Church as the need arises but its validity will ultimately depend upon its general acceptance by the whole body of the Church. Thus, Orthodox Church administration calls for humility, love and willingness to be

led by the 'the mind of the community' at every stage.

Finally, a word about how important it is in the Christian church to distinguish between the concept of 'leadership' and certain perverse concepts of 'authority.' Leaders are needed for the proper functioning of all societies and groups, and it is necessary for all persons to learn to acknowledge leadership. However, leadership is not the same as the kind of 'authority' that has to rely on 'law' to enforce obedience from ordinary members. The State, which has the responsibility to curb anti-social activities, rightly uses power and authority to enforce law. But the Church exists not to duplicate the State but to inspire people to live by the law of love. 'Order' in the Church has to be achieved in ways different from order in the State.

Megalomania and grandiosity - whether in lay people, priests, or bishops will not help the development of a community of love held together by mutual caring and mutual respect. What is needed is the kind of moral leadership that fosters loving human relations where individuals are encouraged to recognize their self-worth and to make their maximum contribution to the common good. The ability to inspire and coordinate the creative impulses of members of the group is the mark of true leadership. It is where this is absent that people resort to authoritarianism and legalism.

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"The Church is meant to be the Body of Christ - an extension of the incarnation. To put it in other words, the Church is the sphere in which the saving grace of God is communicated to men and women and where they are trained to grow as members of a community of love."

Dr. K. C. Joseph

AURICULAR CONFESSION IN THE SACRAMENT OF ABSOLUTION

The question is very often asked why the Orthodox Church normally requires every member to make a personal confession of sins to, and receive individual absolution from, a priest before receiving the Holy Qurbana. No individual or group can claim to understand fully everything that the Church under God's direction has ordained for the welfare of her children. So the mere fact that anyone does not understand a certain practice in the Church does not prove that practice is wrong. However, we shall try to understand what this particular practice of auricular confession stands for. We may get the right perspective in this matter if we have the following facts in mind:-

1. The practice of personal confession of sins has been existing in the Church from very early times. James 5:16; Acts 19:18,19; John 20:23.

2. The majority of Christians in the world belongs to Churches which have this practice (the Church of Rome, the Great Eastern Orthodox Churches of Greece, Russia, etc., many of the Lesser Eastern Churches, a large section of the Church of England, etc.)

3. Personal confession is only one part of the Sacrament of Absolution; it is not even the most important part.

4. Whatever else it does or does not, it does not seem to do any spiritual harm to anyone, except those who do it insincerely; on the contrary, it has been of very great help to many a devout soul.

In these circumstances, will it not be at least a training in humility to submit to this discipline of the Church even if we have not yet been able to understand its real significance?

If we agree so far, we may go on to think more deeply and constructively about the Sacrament of Absolution. First of all, it is a Sacrament. And being a Sacrament, it is not appreciated by people who have unfortunately not yet seen the fundamentally Sacramental nature of the Christian religion. The invisible God became visible man in order than the inward grace of redemption may be conveyed to men through outward means. The Incarnation stands for a Sacramental way of Redemption and the Sacraments of the Church are channels by which the Incarnate God continues His work of Redemption. They are visible and outward means in and through which the invisible and inward Grace of God flows into the believer.

The Sacrament of Absolution is one of these Sacraments. It was instituted to convey the grace of penitence and forgiveness, and its basis is: a real willingness to repent on the part of the believer, and a merciful giving of the spirit of penitence and of the grace of forgiveness on the part of God. The inward reality of repentance on the part of the believer is expressed through the outward act of confession, and the inward grace of God's forgiveness is conveyed through the outward means of absolution pronounced by the priest.

But why should a priest come in here? Because this grace of absolution has normally to come (like any other of God's gifts) through visible means (cp. the Apostles' laying on of hands so that people may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit). The priest stands as a minister of God specially appointed for this and other purposes

The priest is the representative of the Church, too, and he acts on her behalf. Sin is a betrayal of the fellowship of the Church as well as a wounding of the heart of God; and if forgiveness is essentially a restoration to a filial relationship with God, it is also a restoration to the fellowship of the Church which is Christ's body and the Christian's home. So the sinner expresses sorrow for sins committed by confessing to the priest, who acts on behalf of both God and the Church.

Three things seem to need clarification in this connection. First, if a believer sincerely feels that there is nothing definite to be confessed, then he or she is free to come to the Holy Communion straightaway. Secondly, in the Sacrament of Absolution, the forgiveness comes from God and not from the priest. It depends only on the sincerity of the penitant and not at all on the worthiness of the priest: God sometimes uses most unworthy instruments for his purposes. Thirdly, confession to a priest does not take away from the responsibility of the sinner to make all possible reparation for the sin committed, in the form of apologies, restitution, acceptance of legal punishment, etc. It is a misunderstanding on this point that has led many good people to denounce the practice of confession.

So far, we have looked at confession from a purely religious point of view. Something more may be added from the point of view of psychology. Here is what an

experienced Christian psychologist has to say on the matter:- "When a man has sinned deeply, he may throw himself at the side of his bed and ask God for forgiveness; but shall we not all be ready to admit that it is very difficult to rise up from one's bedside feeling that anything has happened? Therefore, one of the most valuable things the soul can do is, in Mac Dougall's phrase, to "exteriorize its rottenness" and to share it with another. I am not a Roman Catholic but I am psychologist enough to see that there is a tremendous value in the confessional. A person can pour out all the hidden contents of his heart, the things that worry him, and the sins that bring him low, knowing that no word he says will go further without his permission, that the priest (if he is a person of experience) will be able to help him. The confessor knows also that the priest will make real to him the forgiveness of God, and that his sins, because they are exteriorized and spoken about to a human person, can be dealt with in a way that is so very difficult if we confess our sins to God only. I have known men, the slaves of certain sins for years, who have found release at once when they have shared those sins with another person."(Weatherhead in the book "Discipleship")

Just one word more: is it not often the case that we do not see the need of all these helps, really because we do not see the real sinfulness of our sins? We regard many of our sins as of no consequence and think lightly of them, and so we feel that we are managing all right with a muttered prayer of confession. The 'Sacrament of Absolution' is not meant to be an imposition on the self-complacent, but a provision for "the penitents who long to do God's will, yet stumble continually." If we knew how much it can, when sincerely used, increase our sensitiveness to sin and deepen our experience of forgiveness, we would come to it more frequently and endeavour to bring others to it, too.

"When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away ... my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer." Ps. 32: 3,4.)

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THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND INTER-COMMUNION

To the Orthodox Church the meaning and significance of the Holy Eucharist is what is explained by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 10:16-17: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not communion (koinonia or fellowship) in the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not communion in the Body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." Eucharistic communion is, therefore, at once both sacramental participation in the Body and Blood of Christ and a 'communion of saints' – i.e., mutual fellowship in the Body of Christ, or the Church, which is the Christian community held together by the same faith and discipline.

In other words, Holy Communion is not merely the act of eating and drinking something lying on the altar as an end in itself but also, at the same time, the fact of being in the fellowship of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. When there is a split in the Church – a schism, as it is called, or a breaking of the fellowship in the community of the Church – it is at once followed by the breaking of the communion in the sacrament also, the two schismatic sections no longer having communion at the altar. The only way to restore communion at the altar is to restore the fellowship in the body of Christ. Communion at the altar (i.e., sharing together in the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament) is the expression of, and thanksgiving for, fellowship in the Church through a shared faith and discipline. Where there is no such unity in the faith and discipline of the Church, communion together will not mean what it is expected to mean. It will only be like the comradeship of private individuals at a tea-party or dinner together.

Now, the comradeships at a dinner or tea-party is nothing to be despised. It is, of course, a very valuable experience, and we should indeed have more of it. Only, the 'communion of saints' or fellowship in the Body of Christ associated with Holy Communion is not the same thing. The matter may be much less emotionally-felt by most people, but it is spiritually more binding and has deeper significance. To those who say: "Let us forget about our schism, let us just eat and drink together at the Lord's table," Holy Communion does not seem to be what it is meant to be. To them, it seems to be just another event, perhaps a little more solemn, like the tea-party or the joint dinner. This light attitude to the Holy Communion on their part is actually one of the reasons why others who associate greater meaning to the Holy Communion cannot lightly accept their invitation to join in the eating and drinking.

They should ask themselves: why this eating and drinking in the Church at all? Why not be satisfied with tea-parties at home? They should take more seriously St. Paul's exhortation in 1 Cor.11:18.: "In the first place, when you assemble as a Church, I hear that there are divisions among you... Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?" Not sentimentally-felt comradeship perhaps, but the deeper unity in faith and discipline in the Body of Christ, is the pre-condition to joint Holy Communion.

Holy Communion together is an expression of fellowship with one another through a shared membership in the Church. The Orthodox think in terms of restoring communion (by restoring common membership) and not in terms of so-called Inter-Communion, which assumes that it is a special arrangement between two or more separate bodies, which do not have a common membership. To institute what is called Inter-Communion is to institutionalize non-membership, and thus to stand in the way of ultimate unity.

Christ's desire is that we should all be one, and not that we should remain separated but try to make up for the separation by Inter-Communion. The problem is that of separation, which used to be called 'schism.' Restoring unity is the way of restoring communion.

True ecumenism does not consist in saying, "Let us forget all that divides us, and let us just get together at the Holy Communion." True ecumenism seeks a deeper unity by helping Churches to examine what it is that has caused division among them so that those causes may be overcome and the unity in the faith and discipline of the Church re-established - which unity can then be expressed by common participation in the Holy Communion at the same altar. In the mean time, the fact that we cannot participate together in the Body and Blood of Chirst at the same altar will continue to be a stern reminder that we cannot be comfortable, but that we should examine the cause of our division and move towards that unity in faith and discipline which will enable us to come together at the same altar. It is our existence as separate Churches that has to end first. Trying to hide that fact by treating Holy Communion in the same way as a tea-party of private individuals defeats the very purpose of Holy Communion.

So the question becomes first of all: 'Why are we different Churches, instead of being one Church?' And that requires further study of the cause of separation, as well as of what constitutes unity.

THE TROUBLES IN THE MALANKARA CHURCH

Letter to a friend in England

You say you have been re-reading Bishop Brown's book on the Malankara Church. I would go along with Bishop Brown's book as the best so far published in English on our Church. I shall comment briefly on the titles "Syrian," "Jacobite," etc., which you have asked me to explain before commenting on the present situation.

It is now generally agreed that the St. Thomas Christians of Malankara (Kerala) adopted the name "Syrian" after several batches of Syrian families (East Syrian, Chaldean, Surai - what you will!), in their desire to escape from persecution in the Persian Empire, migrated to Kerala some time during the 5th to the 7th Centuries A.D. and were granted special status as a refugee community by the then ruler of the area (Cochin, Venad, Malankara?).

The connection with the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch (West Syrian) dates from 1665 when the Malankara Church received from him restoration of Apostolic Succession, which had been broken when the Malankara Church repudiated the one-time forcefully-imposed Roman supremacy. The name of "Jacobite" also came then, because the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch belonged to the non-Chalcedonian group of Eastern Churches which had been nick-named "Jacobite" after Jacobus Baradaeus who in the 6th Century had consolidated non-Chalcedonian Orthodoxy in the Middle East.

From the latter part of the 19th Century, the relations between the Malankara Church and the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch were often marred by the attempts of several Patriarchs to establish the same kind of "authority" over the Malankara Church (including temporal jurisdiction over property) as the Pope of Rome had over Churches all over the world which accepted him as supreme head.

There was always one section of the Malankara Church which was prepared to give authority to the Patriarch; but an increasingly larger section steadily repudiated that claim of the Patriarch. It is this latter section (more numerous and better educated than the former) which established a canonically valid Catholicate in India to ensure the autocephalous status of the Malankara Church. This section repudiated also the name "Jacobite," and maintained that the title "Orthodox" was a more correct nomenclature because the Malankara Church was one with (and in full communion with) all the non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, like the Coptic, the Ethiopian, the Armenian, the Syrian, etc. However, this section also retained the older appellation "Syrian," owing to (I feel) considerations of race, caste, what you will! (Actually, the official appellation of the Church under the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch is also "Syrian Orthodox;" they do not call themselves "Jacobite" in Syria.)

So we come to the court case of 1956 which you mention as the last thing you have noted in Bishop Brown's account. From the High Court of Kerala the case went to the Supreme Court of India. And in 1958 the Supreme Court declared that the Syrian Orthodox Church in India is autocephalous and that the Catholicos is recognized by law as the juridical head of this Church according to the existing Constitution upheld by the Supreme Court. The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch would be accorded a place of honour whenever he was present in India by invitation, but that would not entitle him to any "authority" over the Malankara Church.

In what seemed then to be a spiritually-motivated move, the present Syrian Patriarch of Antioch wrote to the Catholicos then that he was willing to accept the Constitution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India with the Catholicos as its juridical head, which Constitution had been upheld by the Supreme Court. On that basis, there ensued a formal reconciliation between the "Patriarch's Party" and what they called the "Catholicos's Party" in the Malankara Church, towards the end of 1958. There was rejoicing all round, and the newly reunited Church began to move into various new areas of activity. The Syrian Orthodox Mission Hospital at Kolenchery (near Alwaye), the new activities of the Orthodox Student Movement, including the Orthodox Student Centres at Kottayam and Trivandrum, etc, are all results of that reconciliation of 1958.

But, almost exactly 12 years after that, in 1970 the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch started writing to various persons in India that he did not approve of certain actions or statements of the Catholicos or some of the bishops under the Catholicos. The Patriarch followed this up by sending a Syrian bishop to India as an "Apostolic Delegate" in Kerala to be the Patriarch's spokesman in India, very much on the lines of the Apostolic Delegates the Pope of Rome sends to various countries. That Syrian bishop gradually began to consolidate a new "Patriarch's Party"

in Kerala, and he went on to repudiate the Catholicos's claim that the Malankara Church is autocephalous as stated in the Constitution formally accepted by the Patriarch and everyone else in 1958.

It gradually dawned on the people following the Catholicos that the Patriarch's move in 1958 was only to save his followers from having to pay the large amount of money that the Supreme Court had ordered to be paid to the Catholicos by them by way of 'costs of the litigation.'

(According to law, if the winning party does not claim costs within 12 years, the court order regarding payments to the winning party by the losing party would lapse. Because of the reconciliation that the Catholicos accepted in good faith in 1958, the Catholicos had not made any claims for the payments to him of "costs" by the Patriarch's Party.)

In 1973 the Government of India refused to renew the "residence permit" of the so-called "Apostolic Delegate" sent by the Patriarch, on the ground that the government was satisfied that this foreigner was creating and fostering dissension in a community in India. This enraged the Patriarch and the people whom his "Apostolic Delegate" had organized into a new Patriarch's Party. The Patriarch retaliated by inviting as many as six persons from among his followers in India and consecrating them as bishops for "his" Church in India. These six bishops are now in India and call themselves bishops of the "Jacobite" Church.

So now there is again a small "Patriarch's Party" in India with six bishops and they call themselves the Jacobite Syrian Church in India as opposed to the larger Syrian Orthodox Church in India with the Catholicos as head and governed by the Constitution supported by the Supreme Court judgement of 1958.

The latest position* is that the responsible bodies of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India (the Episcopal Synod, the Managing Committee, and the Association) have declared that the six bishops consecrated recently by the Patriarch, and their followers calling themselves the Jacobite Church, have by their own actions and statements alienated themselves from the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, and that they have thus forfeited all claims for the use of the properties that are being managed now under the Constitution of the Church validated by the Supreme Court judgement of 1958.

Court cases will now follow, as you guess, and in fact several are already in courts. As before, the "Patriarch's Party" consists mostly of the less educated people in the areas north of Kottayam, and there is no doubt that cultural factors and plain snobbery play an important role in the new split in the Malankara Church. The Patriarch seems bent on creating a rival Catholicos who will be subject to him in order to fight against the already functioning, independent Catholicos who maintains the autocephalous status of the Malankara Church. Unfortunately, there are some prominent men in the community who actively work for the Patriarch and I am afraid "maintaining the purity of the faith" is not their only motive.

** This article was written in the 1970s and has been included here primarily as a useful backgrounder on the unfortunate split in the Orthodox Church in India.*

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CATHOLICISM AND PROTESTANTISM

About thirty years ago, when I was a student, almost every Conference or Committee meeting of the Malankara Orthodox Church seemed to be incomplete without some discussion as to whether certain practices or some persons were "Catholic" or "Protestant." This, of course, did not refer to membership in the Roman Catholic Church or in one of the Protestant Churches. People were referring to certain attitudes, postures, tendencies, or general spiritual outlook. Fortunately, we as a community seem to have outlived such an unhealthy preoccupation with classifying practices and persons in this way. Nevertheless, as we are now in the process of a reappraisal of the real "content" of our Orthodoxy, it will clarify our thinking if we try to understand what our fathers were talking about when they either condemned or approved of persons and practices according to whether they were judged Protestant or Catholic. We should try to see what these terms really stand for.

Remembering that "Catholicism" is not necessarily Roman Catholicism and that "Protestantism" is not to be mixed up with membership in, or the beliefs of, any of the Protestant Churches, we may say that these words stand for two somewhat antithetical conceptions of Christianity and of the Christian way of salvation. These two ways of understanding and practising Christianity are now seen to coexist increasingly in most of the major denominations of the Universal Christian Church, and perhaps "Orthodoxy" is best fitted to evolve a synthesis of the two. The following are some of the main points at which the difference between the two conceptions of Christianity manifests itself.

1. Catholicism emphasizes the authority of the "Teaching Church" whereas Protestantism upholds the liberty of the individual's "private judgement" in all matters of faith and practice.

2. The Catholic accepts unquestioningly the dogmas and doctrines maintained by "the infallible wisdom of the Church," whereas the Protestant refuses to be circumscribed by dogmas and doctrines and, in the last resort, relies more on his own conscience.

3. To the Protestant, the Bible is the one and only guide and Standard of Judgement whereas, to the Catholic, although the Bible is indeed the inspired record of God's word, it can be correctly understood only as interpreted by the Church's Holy Tradition.

4. The Catholic believes that the Apostolic Priesthood is the divinely appointed link between God and man, whereas the Protestant believes in the Priesthood of all believers and hence in the right of every individual believer to have direct access to God without any mediation by priests.

5. To the Catholic, the Sacraments are the divinely appointed, and hence indispensable, means of Grace whereas, to the Protestant, the Sacraments are only helps which may or may not be used by the individual according to his own temperament and convenience.

6. Catholicism believes in the real and objective presence of Christ in the consecrated elements of the Holy Eucharist, irrespective of the faith of the individual worshipper or the moral purity of the celebrating priest, whereas Protestantism sees the Holy Eucharist primarily as a symbol of Christ's fellowship with His disciples, in which the experience of Christ's spiritual presence comes to each worshipper according to his own faith.

7. " Justification by faith alone" is the watchword of Protestantism whereas, in Catholicism, "works of obedience and charity," under the direction of the Church, are believed to bring "merit" to the individual.

8. According to Catholicism, individuals can accumulate "merit" by continued holy living and by martyrdom in Christ's name, and the saints who have acquired a store of "merit" can help those who ask for their intercession whereas, in Protestantism, there is no place for the request to the saints who have departed from this life for their intercession.

9. Catholicism believes that souls who have departed from this world can be helped by prayers on their behalf and therefore enjoins all the faithful to pray for the departed, whereas Protestantism does not recognize the value of prayers for the dead.

10. To the Catholic, the Church of Christ is the visible and exclusive sphere of the redemptive grace of God and those who separate themselves from the visible unity of the Church through heresy or schism are thereby cutting themselves away from the grace of God, whereas to the Protestant the unity of the Church is only an invisible reality dependent on the personal faith of the individual Christian and hence the Protestant does not consider external

organisational oneness as an essential of the Church.

11. Catholicism considers pride as the basic sin and therefore prescribes obedience as the main antidote to sin, whereas Protestantism tends to regard moral purity as more important than anything else and in practice this often results in self-righteousness and assertiveness. Consequently, in civil life, Catholicism tends to produce dictatorship whereas Protestantism tends to encourage indiscipline and disunion.

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"Gratitude goes along with honest recognition of the fact that what one has is not one's own achievement but something given by someone else, and it generates genuine humility .....

.... Real gratitude is such a positive outgoing of thoughts and feelings towards God or other benefactors that it does not easily slip into self-congratulation or self-righteousness. .....

.... Gratitude always brings joy into our lives, not necessarily hilarity or outwardly visible cheerfulness, but a deep sense of inner well-being and an ability to take in with equanimity all experiences of life, whether pleasant or unpleasant."

DR. K.C. JOSEPH

THE MARXIST INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY COMPARED WITH THE CHRISTIAN

To a thoughtful student of history there has been no more significant fact in the modern era than the emergence of a new type of man during the last century – a man who is conscious of his powers as never before, unsatisfied with himself in many ways, but defiant and rebellious, willing to risk everything in a struggle with Providence. The Prometheus myth seems at last to have really taken hold of man and let loose "the powers of hell" in him. "A new type of man is coming into being," wrote the French Jesuit theologian, Henri de Lubac, in the Spring 1948 number of the Dublin Review, "transforming the more or less accepted idea man has hitherto held of himself, his history, and his destiny... There have been plenty of changes from the earliest ages of man up to our own era; but throughout the whole of recorded history such changes seem to have occurred within fairly narrow limits... Man was still, as at the time of his first awakening, an impatient animal, discontented with his lot, always ready to rise in revolt, but his rebellions were merely local and sporadic, hardly more than outbreaks of fever, never the successive stages of a conscious planned activity. But our own age has produced a new ambition. An overmastering idea has arisen with the strength of some hitherto undiscovered force. Little by little man has raised his head against the oppressive weight of his destiny. He wants to escape those fatalities which, from time immemorial, he has believed invincible." Dostoevsky's 'Letters from the Underworld' may be regarded as one of the earliest cries of this unprecedented revolt of man. Since this is the spiritual background of much of 19th and 20th Century thinking, including that of Karl Marx and his associates, we might look at it for a little while before proceeding to consider Marx's theory of history.

Science is not a growth of yesterday; it beginnings can be traced back through centuries; but until the 19th Century science was more or less a mere means of satisfying man's innate curiosity or of procuring certain practical advantages. In the 19th Century, for the first time, science emerged as a terrific positive force which both exhilarated and frightened its creator, man. He awoke and found that his plaything had assumed the shape of Mephistopheles, the Prince of Darkness. Faust had only to barter his soul, and all the universe would dance at his will. The temptation was too much; and man embarked on his new role as the self-appointed, self-conscious administrator of the universe. He was going to possess the world and forge his own destiny. Nothing was to be allowed to stand in his way, not even the Author of the Universe and the source of man's own being.

Paradoxically enough, it was this aggressive will to self-determination in man which Marx sought to fortify and exploit by his doctrine of economic determinism. Marx had one of the shrewdest minds in 19th Century Germany; he saw the increasing strength of numbers among the workers of industrialized Europe and the terrific power that could be unleashed if these workers could be maddened by the spirit of revolt and made to fight recklessly against their masters; and he built up a theory to fit these emerging facts of 19th Century Europe. That is at once the strength of his doctrine and its weakness, as we shall try to see presently. In the mean time it seems rather important to note this genesis of the Marxian theory of history, because modern Marxists seem to be incapable of seeing this, and because our estimate of the theory will depend on our evaluation of the data and assumption on which the theory is built.

If proof were needed for the fact that Marxian economic determinism was the child rather than the father of modern Prometheus, a letter written by Engles to Heinz Sharkenburg (25 January 1894) might help. He wrote: "Men make their history themselves, but hitherto they have not done so with a collective will according to an all-embracing plan. Their efforts oppose each other; thus they are ruled by necessity, completed and expressed by chance. When society seizes the means of production, the product will no longer dominate the producer. Conscious organisation will replace the anarchy which tyrannizes over social production and the struggle for individual existence will cease. Only thus can man, in some sense, detach himself definitely from the animal world. He will pass from the condition of animal existence. All the conditions of life which have hitherto dominated men will pass under their control; they will thus become for the first time the real masters of nature, because they will be masters of their own association.... Those external objective forces which dominated history will come under their control. Henceforth men will make their own history in full consciousness; henceforth the social causes they set in motion will be increasingly potent to attain the desire effect. It will be the leap of the human race from the reign of necessity into the reign of liberty."

It is the arrogant self-confidence of the Prometheus of the new science that breathes through this passage. Confident that he has at last become the arbiter of his own fate, he weaves out of past history a theory which would logically fit in with present fact. It is a brilliant theory, for it explains many hitherto unexplained facts of history; but it is a fatally inadequate theory because, in order to maintain its claim of being the panacea, many inconvenient facts of history have to be ruthlessly suppressed, distorted or ignored. It is the same old story of man creating his God in his own image.

Let us turn now for a moment and see what this Marxian theory of history is. Engles himself has summarized it in his preface to the "authorized English translation" of the Communist Manifesto: "That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of the epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles form a series of evolutions in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class – the proletariat – cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class – the bourgeoisie – without at the same time, and once for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles."

Here, "the present fact" of the year 1848, when the Manifesto was first issued, was the sense of power of the workers of industrial Europe and their determination to use their collective strength to improve their lot. The enemy from whom they had to wrest the means for the improvement of their lot consisted of the owners or "haves" of European industry – their name: the bourgeoisie. So the impending struggle was between the workers (or the proletariat) as a class and the bourgeoisie as a class. Victory for the proletariat was certain, because theirs were the hands that turned the wheels of industry and without them nothing could be produced, if only they were organized and disciplined. It was easy enough to forsee ultimate victory for the proletariat, and if one were already inclined to discredit spiritual values, this victory could easily be seen as the victory of sheer material power, a victory won by the sheer determination of the workers to have more food and more physical comforts than they had before. For a powerful mind like Marx's, trained in Hegelian dialectics, this situation provided the greatest opportunity to work backwards and to see an endless vista of class struggles, right up to the beginning of history. What more natural than that the most elementary physical urge of man – hunger – should have decided his ways of life? What further simplification can there be of the complicated tangle of historical processes than to work it all out as the dialectical onward movement of man goaded on by such a basic urge as hunger and the craving for physical comforts? Could there be any theory that could be more easily understood by the common worker and hence could be used effectively to rally the workers of all the world under the banner of revolt against the class of their employers?

Marx and Engels thought like realists. They could not possibly agree to be among the visionaries who read history in terms of "the might-have-been." Every stage in civilization that existed did really exist and so it should be explained, and not explained away. Therefore, Marx and Engels gave a real place in their scheme of history not only to bourgeois capitalism, against which they were waging war, but also to feudalism and all earlier forms of economic arrangements in society. These all had to be, in the dialectical process of history, and did serve a useful purpose in their place and time. Only, now they are outmoded and society must move on to a further stage. As to the future, Marx's realism made him laugh at the utopias forecast by some of the socialists of his day. He himself had nothing substantial to offer, but something had to be said to the workers of the world who must unite with hope, and so, with a naivete that is astonishing in a thinker of his calibre, he left the matter to hang on two expressions: "classless society of the future" and "the automatic withering away of the State" – expressions that would not stand a few minutes' serious examination by anyone not already blinded by Marxist piety.

There we have the Communist Manifesto in a nutshell – one of the most brilliant half-truths that have ever fascinated the mind of man. What have Christians to say to this?

First, that it does contain some truth. Some very important elements of truth, which any society can ignore only at its peril. There is a certain determinism in history, and economic factors influencing society have a great part in deciding the form that this determinism takes from age to age. The principle of unlimited individual freedom which some capitalists claim for their pet system of free enterprise does, in fact, issue in licence for a few and slavery for the many, and hence cannot be accepted by

anyone who cares for justice. He who would be wise would avoid the stubbornness of selfish conservatism and consciously try to co-operate with any movement for a juster form of society. Man has a body; hunger is a reality; and the craving for food and physical comforts is one of the inexorable forces that drive man onward into ceaseless activity, often bringing him into a life and death struggle against anything or anyone that stands in the way of his satisfaction. That is the basis of an economic determinism which has to be reckoned with in any scheme of society. Any body-denying idealism, any visionary sentimentalism which ignores man's hunger, is bound to bring tragedy in its wake. Any scheme of salvation which overlooks the body of man and preaches comfort to the individual soul in the next world, without doing anything to break up unjust social and political orders and to establish more and more justice in the affairs of this world, would help only the powers of darkness to extend their reign over both the bodies and souls of the children of men. Any system of society which makes it possible for the means of production to be concentrated in the hands of a few and dooms the rest of mankind to be dependent for their creature comforts on the sweet will and pleasure of the favoured few, will inevitably bring upon itself the horrors of revolution, bloodshed, and vengeance. The Christian Church generally, and the so-called Christian nations and communities especially, have been guilty of the grossest insensitiveness and neglect in these matters, and communism has come as God's judgement on this inexcusable failure. Marx and his associates have to be regarded in the same way as the Prophet Amos regarded Assyria (Amos. 6:14) – the instrument used by God to punish and call to repentance his disobedient people who had forgotten justice and mercy and gone after idols. The Communist interpretation of history, therefore, should help Christians to learn many elements of truth which they have often neglected.

Having said the above, most emphatically, we should, however, add, secondly, that the Communist theory of history is a half-truth, and a very dangerous half-truth. For one thing, it ignores many facts, such as the fact of God, the fact of faith, the fact of heroic love, the fact of Jesus Christ, the fact of the Christian Church, the fact of Christian saints like St. Francis of Assissi. To say the very least, the Marxist has no more scientific justification for ignoring these facts or treating them as irrelevant than the Christian has for taking them seriously and refusing to accept any view of history which does not give them their proper place. Marx and Engels believed that their systems was built upon "real" premises whereas other systems were based on illusory premises, that their premises could be verified in experience whereas other premises could not be so verified and hence must be rejected. The Marxists are, of course, free to hold whatever belief they like: but it must be pointed out that their beliefs have no more scientific justification than the beliefs of some of those who differ from them. "It is not true," writes J.M. Cameron. "that in history we are faced, first, with men associating together in economic life, and then with men worshipping the gods, inventing moral codes, and justifying this or that political order. We are faced with men engaging in all these activities at once. If we approach history without preconceptions, we have no means by which we can determine certain activities to be primary and others secondary. All we know is that they co-exist. As sociologists or historians we ought not to single out certain phenomena and describe them as cause, other phenomena as effects. The only assumption that accords with the scientific spirit is that we are faced with a developing whole, the parts of which are continuously interacting. If we wish to say with the Marxist that spiritual activities and notions arise out of economic activities and social relations, we must recognize that this can only be done by bringing to the study of history beliefs about the nature of reality which cannot be established by historical study itself. The reason why Marx and Engels abstracted, from the total historical picture, men in their economic relations, and declared that the rest of human activity was subordinate to the economic foundation, was that they approached history in the first place as convinced materialists. Had they approached history as convinced idealists, what for materialists was the foundation would have become the superstructure, the superstructure the foundation. History is a combination of events that have this or that pattern in accordance with the fundamental beliefs about reality with which we approach it."

We cannot here go into a refutation of materialism or a justification of the Christian world-view. Readers of books like William Temple's "Nature, Man, and God," or A. E. Taylor's "Does God Exist?" are likely to find that the materialist view of Reality leaves more questions unanswered than does the Christian view. In any case, the Christian does not claim that he can explain everything. The one conviction that is all-determining for him is that Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, is the clue to all history and all Reality, and that everything must be judged with reference to Him. This is a stupendous claim for one Person who appears in human history. But that is what the whole Christian approach to Reality is based on.

What, then, is the Christian view of history? The Christian view begins with God. In the beginning God

created the world and all that is therein. Man is a created being — with no worth or dignity of his own, but with an infinite worth and dignity derived from the good will of the creator. His existence, like that of every other creature, is entirely dependent on the continual exercise of God's will and power, and if these are withdrawn he will be reduced to the nothingness from whence he was called into being. Man was created a free being, capable of rendering an uncompleted service and of entering into a voluntary fellowship with his creator. This meant that he could also refuse that service and that fellowship. Created "in the image of God," man's God-like nature was a continual temptation to him to assert that he was himself the source of his own good. This he did, and as a consequence he fell from his true nature. This original sin, the perversion of his true nature, poisoned his will, his mind and his emotional life, so that from henceforth everything he did by himself was tainted with corruption. Estranged from the creator, he came into conflict with himself and with his fellow-beings. Conflict and struggle became the characteristic of his very existence. This was not merely a "class struggle" between economic groups motivated by the urge of hunger and the craving for physical comforts. It was much more than that, much more complicated and much more inherently tragic. Man was at war with himself and, as a result, not only in the economic or political sphere, but in every aspect of his life, he was at war with his fellow-creatures – in fact, with all creation. No independent effort of man could remedy this situation. That is why the Christian does not share the communist's optimism. The only solution is for God Himself to act redemptively and, reconciling man to Himself, enable him to resolve the conflicts of life.

History, to the Christian, is not just the spectacle of class-struggles; it is the theatre of a three-fold operation: 1) the overarching original purpose of God, thwarted, but not defeated by man's sin; 2) the conflicts and struggles which inexorably dog the steps of disobedient man; and 3) the redemptive activity of God's love, wooing man back to faith and obedience. All the three are apparent in the world, and all the three are involved in any event of history. History cannot be properly understood without an appreciation of all these three factors in its making.

All the three meet in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in Whom man is reconciled to God. Jesus Christ is the Mediator: He is the source of the new life granted to man. To the extent that man turns to Him in faith, all his conflict will be resolved in the experience of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is at once a present and a future experience. It is a present experience to those who accept it here and now in faith; that is how St. Francis of Assissi and others like him came into being; but even they have to live their earthly days among others who have not yet turned to God in faith. Hence we have the two orders of life, and two laws thereto, even in the sphere of history: 1) love, the law of life for those who are being redeemed, and 2) justice, the rule of social living for all. The Christian has two citizenships, one that of the city of God, the other that of the city of man. As a citizen of the city of God he lives the law of love and humbly co-operates with God to bring all his fellow-beings into that experience; as a citizen of the city of man he works unceasingly for greater and greater justice among men. There is no rule of thumb in this adventure. As many as are led by the spirit of God are His children, and in everything God works for good with those who love Him.

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THE EUCHARIST

The special issue of the Church Weekly on the Eucharist eminently deserves general welcome and careful study. All those articles will help the careful reader to participate in the Holy Eucharist more meaningfully. I do hope that persons who are really concerned about the spiritual growth of the members of their congregations will obtain copies of that issue of The Church Weekly and distribute them among those who have not so far seen them.

To all that has been so well and so intelligently said in those articles, I would like to add, not a new idea, but a special emphasis on the simple meaning of the word Eucharist and its relevance for the life of the communicant.

The word Eucharist means 'thanksgiving.' It is significant that the Liturgy of St. James (from which were derived all the other Liturgies used in the Syrian Churches), in a rather brief but very crucial Response of the Congregation, puts thanksgiving at the very apex of an affirmation about the Holy Sacrament. After the Kiss of Peace and before the Prayer of Consecration, when the Deacon exhorts the people to attend with reverence, purity and holiness, the congregation responds with the statement: "This Qurbana is blessing, peace, sacrifice and thanksgiving."

The blessing, of course, is God's blessing, made real to the world through the Incarnation of the Son of God, which is dramatically represented in the form of the Liturgy. Peace is the effect on those who accept and assimilate the blessing of God. Sacrifice is the Self-offering of the Son of God which makes it possible for believers to offer themselves to God in union with the Son of God. And thanksgiving is the final outcome in the life of believers who experience the Son of God through participation in the Liturgy. All these four aspects are meant to become real to the communicant.

I think it is good and necessary to emphasize very specially the importance of thanksgiving in the Holy Qurbana. If we study carefully the life and teachings of the great saints, we are likely to become aware of the supreme significance of thanksgiving or gratitude in their spiritual experience. Almost all the other virtues can easily slip into the vice of phariseeism as it is depicted in Christ's parable of the pharisee and the publican who went to pray. Gratitude goes along with honest recognition of the fact that what one has is not one's own achievement but something given by someone else, and it generates genuine humility. The pharisee's use of the word 'thanks' is a mere cover-up for self-congratulation; it does not generate humility. Real gratitude is such a positive outgoing of thoughts and feelings towards God or other benefactors that it does not easily slip into self-congratulation or self-righteousness.

In a real sense, the spirit of thankfulness or gratitude is Grace, a gift of God. In John Calvin's way of thinking, it is the Grace of God which generates and draws out gratitude and thankfulness in the believer's heart. And yet, it is also important consciously to cultivate gratitude or thanksgiving as a basic constituent of our experience of the Eucharist. "Work out your salvation.... for it is God who works in you."

Think of the persons within our acquaintance who seem to be very conscious of other people's shortcomings and enjoy putting them down by censorious remarks; who, in fact, always tend to be cantankerous. If we study their life carefully, we are likely to discover that the trouble with them is that they are not motivated by any gratitude in their lives. They are usually more aware of what God or other people have not given them than pleased with what God and human friends have, in fact, given to them. Ingratitude seems to be a greater sickness of the soul than anything else. On the other hand, gratitude always brings joy into our lives, not necessarily hilarity or outwardly visible cheerfulness, but a deep sense of inner well-being and an ability to take in with equanimity all experiences of life, whether pleasant or unpleasant.

Let us examine ourselves to see whether our participation in the Holy Eucharist is enabling us to develop the habit of being genuinely thankful for all that God has permitted us to experience in life. Let us remember that a grateful heart will be a joyful heart, always more eager to see and appreciate whatever is good in other people than to note their shortcomings and to put them down!

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Matt. 18:15-20

There are many things that used to be said in connection with some of the well-known texts in the Bible that can be shrugged away now as being rather superficial sentiments of pious people. For example, a great deal of what goes by the name of meditation on Christian fellowship seems to express a piety that has little relevance to the hard realities of an age of technology. Nevertheless, there are certain things that Christ said about human relationships that cannot be dismissed in that way. One such statement is contained in the passage above.

"If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven."

Agreeing together about what we want is the only way to pray together. It is not that when several people pray for the same things it will make a better impression on God. No, rather the process of agreeing together is also the way of making the prayer less objectionable and more acceptable to God.

Pride and selfishness are two basic problems in people working together. They destroy fellowship. They distort our vision and make us see things through coloured glasses, as it were. Trying to agree together, before going ahead with any prayer or programme, is a process which will help correct any distortions in our thinking.

Self-assertiveness and the desire to have one's own way can produce much heat but very little light. Very often we get excited when our self-importance is touched somehow.

The process of agreeing together calls for some amount of self-denial, detachment and discipline. The question "what is right?" always leads to a better understanding of any situation than the question "who is right?"

Group thinking is rather different from egotistic thinking. Teamwork produces a quality of common life which is different from lone-wolfing. In group-thinking one does not first make up one's mind and then tell others what the decision is, but one thinks aloud in company, all the time wishing to learn from the others until, in the process of sharing thoughts together, the group arrives at a "mind of the community" or a general consensus.

This becomes possible when everyone practices a little humility and unselfishness, and is open to the guidance of God. Christ's promise in the above passage is a promise to disciples who want the presence of their Master above everything else. That is, it is a promise to those who are willing to think and act according to the mind of Christ, those who are willing to correct themselves in the light of Christ's standard, those who are willing, like John the Baptist, to say "he must increase, I must decrease."

This is not easy. But there is no other way. "He who wants to be my disciple must deny himself." In the long run, self-denial is the only way to self-fulfilment.

However, Christian fellowship is not merely for mutual correction. It is also for mutual encouragement. Unless we are utterly depraved or absolutely cynical, there is not one of us who does not at least sometimes feel frustrated, lonely and discouraged. And we need mutual encouragement from one another.

Mutual correction, and mutual encouragement, are both parts of the experience of meeting together in Christ's name and trying to agree together concerning the things that we should work for. Let us pray that God's Holy Spirit might help us all to grow in the experience of this kind of fellowship together.

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Who did pray for Thy disciples that they might be one, even as Thou art one with the Father, draw us to Thyself, that in common love and obedience to Thee, we may be united to one another in the fellowship of the one Spirit, and in common service to mankind.

"Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee together as Thou deservest, to give and not to count the cost; to fight for Thee and not to heed the wounds; to strive and not to seek rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we are doing Thy will, to the glory of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen."

RELIGION IN TERMS OF FRIENDSHIP

Epistle of James: Ch 2. v 23: "Abraham was called the friend of God"

I wonder if there is anyone here who has not had a human friend at some time. Let us think for a little while about friendship. Will you close your eyes for a few moments and go back quickly in imagination over your lives from as early as you can recollect having friends? Who was the person whose presence brought gladness into your heart? Try to remember and relive all the feelings that you experienced in relation to that person. Happiness, enthusiasm, confidence, disappointment, hurt, anger, affection, relaxation, restfulness, a sense of well-being? Ponder over all this for a little while.

What does friendship mean to you? The English novelist, George Elliott, has described her experience of friendship in the following poetic words:-

"Oh the comfort, the inexpressible comfort
Of feeling safe with a person,
Having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words,
But pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together.
And a faithful hand will take and sift them,
Keep what is worth keeping,
And with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away."

"Feeling safe with a person" - that is George Elliott's experience of friendship, in a few words. That, of course, does not necessarily mean that friendship is all happiness, and no sorrow or hurt at all. Very often, friendship involves differences of opinion, misunderstanding, conflict, hurt, drudgery, physical discomforts. But under-girding all the varied experiences through which two friends may pass in their relation with each other, they are there in times of need. We say that a friend in need is a friend indeed. There may be fair weather companions galore – men and women who will stay with you and even work with you while things are all going on smoothly. But how many of them will continue to stand by you when things go wrong? A true friend is one who does not desert you when all is not well, someone whom you rely on in dark days as well as bright.

Now, let us see whether this concept of friendship can illuminate for us some of the dark and dreary roads through which our religion seems to be dragging along. Is there any way of experiencing religion in terms of friendship?

The Bible repeatedly uses the concept of friendship to describe God's relation with men and women. This occurs both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the prayer of Jehoshaphat recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles, we see the phrase "the seed of Abraham, Thy friend." Again, in a moving passage in the Book of Isaiah, God is represented as saying, "Thou, Israel, my servant Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend." These passages inspired the writer of the Epistle of James to declare that Abraham was called the friend of God. In another place in the Old Testament, the Book of Exodus describes God speaking to Moses face to face "as a man speaks to his friend."

In the New Testament, Jesus is spoken of as "the friend of publicans and sinners." Jesus himself speaks of "our friend Lazarus." Jesus, the disciples, and Lazarus, they were all friends together! A passage in the Gospel according to St. Luke represents Jesus as saying to his disciples: "I tell you, my friends, be not afraid of those who can kill your body"- the vocative 'my friends' coming almost casually, as if it is the most natural way for Jesus to address his disciples!

The great New Testament portion for this concept of friendship is the 15th chapter of St. John's Gospel where, in three successive verses, the word 'friend' comes up as if it were thrust forward deliberately so that no one may overlook it. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This is followed by, "You are my friends, if you do what I ask you to do." Finally, the word is used to indicate the disciples' sharing with Jesus the deepest understanding of God's mind. "I have called you friends, because I have told you everything that I have heard from the Father" – friends sharing one's deepest thoughts and experiences.

One of the most touching passages in the Bible is that description of Jesus on the shore of Lake Tiberias asking Peter (in the version given by Archbishop William Temple): "Simon, son of Jonas, are you my friend?" This was written after the Church began to think of Jesus as God.

Thus we see that, to several writers of the books of the Bible, it is perfectly natural to think of man's relation to God in terms of friendship. Religion can be looked at and understood from various other points of view, of course, and each one of those might be specially meaningful to

different people, and even to each person at different times. However, tonight I would like to invite you to spend some time thinking of our religious experience in terms of friendship.

First of all, are we being irreverent when we think of God as a friend? If we have that fear, then perhaps we need to examine the state of our human friendships. There is a good and justifiable sense in which I can take my friend for granted. But there is a foul and inexcusable way of "taking for granted" any friend or, for that matter, anyone as – if I know all about that person, and what I do not know is not worth knowing! Treating a friend as if he or she did not have a separate identity can be very destructive to the friendship itself. Reverence, respect for the personality of the other, is basic to any growing friendship. Friendship does not flourish if two persons do not have genuine respect for each other. If that be the case in human friendship, then we need have no misgivings with regard to friendship with God on the score of reverence. To think of God as a friend is not being irreverent.

The question that makes some others hesitate is even more basic. They are worried about whether this is not all anthropomorphic thinking – creation of a God in man's own image – wishful thinking in the sense that, as essentially lonely persons, we need someone to be a friend, and we imagine that God is such a friend. Here we come to the basic problem of faith.

How do I know that I am not fooling myself? How do I know that there is anyone behind all the changes and chances of life and, if there is one, how do I know that one will be my friend?

I can only speak for myself from the way my own faith has grown over the years. None of the philosophical arguments that I have come across purporting to prove that there is a personal God and that He is friendly to human beings has been able to create in me a faith that matters. My pilgrimage has been through another path altogether. To me, everything started with the community of people who evidently had been drawn together into a mutual relationship through the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, described in the Gospels.

There are many things that I do not like about the Christian Church, my own particular denomination and every other denomination. But I shall ever remain grateful that the Church introduced me to this historical person, Jesus Christ. To me Jesus is a person who lived every moment of his life right through his death with an inner assurance that there is a personal God who is so utterly loving, willing and able to help that the best human word to describe him is 'Father.' To a world that was uncertain or apprehensive about the power behind all existence, Jesus gave the good news that power has a loving will and that all people could look up to him and experience him as an ideal father and friend.

The life and relationships of Jesus were so real and his testimony so authentic that what he taught seemed to me to be veritably true. The more deeply I studied the life and teachings of Jesus, the more deeply convinced I became that he was not a misguided person, and that what he stood for was eminently worth trying out in my own life.

It was the reality of the friendship of the human Jesus that confirmed his disciples in the belief that the power behind the universe was a friend whom they could trust. What is described as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was to his disciples their certainty that the friendship of Jesus which they had so truly experienced continued to be equally effective in their lives even after he had physically disappeared from their midst. And it is a fact that, in spite of all the failings of the Christian Church, generation after generation, people who have turned to the Jesus witnessed to by the Church have experienced Jesus as a living, reliable friend, who made the friendship of God real to them.

Leslie Weatherhead, in his well-known book, "The Transforming Friendship," describes how so many persons to whom conventional religion had not meant anything, came to experience the transforming friendship of Jesus, and found a new meaning in their lives through being in touch with the ultimate source of all life.

Religion experienced as friendship with Jesus, growing into the reality of being in tune with the Infinite Reality behind the universe, making life in the world with all its changes and chances "life in one's father's home" - that is something that can make all the difference to our life, something that can sustain us in all circumstances and make us creative in all our relationships.

This is what Jesus offers when he says: "You are my friends," or "Come to me all who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." There are many in our generation also who have found in Jesus a constant and reliable friend. The innocence of childhood, the embarrassments of adolescence, the conflicts of youth, the doubts of middle age, the loneliness of old age – all these can be experienced differently if you approach it

with Jesus as your friend. Jesus says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Will you open the door of your heart to him, and accept him as your friend?

May the Holy Spirit of God make religion an experience of friendship in our lives - a friendship that will make all our human friendships more meaningful.

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"Treating a friend as if he or she did not have a separate identity can be very destructive to the friendship itself. Reverence, respect for the personality of the other, is basic to any growing friendship. Friendship does not flourish if two persons do not have genuine respect for each other. If that be the case in human friendship, then we need have no misgivings with regard to friendship with God on the score of reverence. To think of God as a friend is not being irreverent."

DR. K.C. JOSEPH

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

It is doubtful if in the history of the human race there has been a more stupendous event than the birth of Jesus, nearly two thousand years ago in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod. That birth has been acclaimed by the Church as the turning point in the long story of God's dealings with his creatures. The eternal God became man for us men and for our salvation. From that time onwards man has been trying to understand more and more of this great mystery of the incarnation. But that search remains inexhaustible. There is a monologue in Syriac where the Blessed Virgin is portrayed as adoring the baby lying in her lap. "What shall I call Thee, my divine child?" she asks. "May I adore thee as my darling first-born or may I adore thee as my God and my Creator?"

Her problem was real. She knew not how she could be both. Generations of men and women have been asking the same question and no one has ever got an answer more definite than that given by the Church with its great dogma of the incarnation.

In the fullness of time God sent his only begotten Son into the world. The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The incarnation was God's way of revealing Himself to man. God became man; the word became flesh.

The idea of the love of God had been growing in the minds of really spiritual men all through the ages. But never had it been a matter of abiding conviction or deep certainty until that love was manifested in the life and death of the Son of God. Those who saw the human face of Jesus became certain that those who saw Him had verily seen the Father, too. "You are the light of the world," Jesus has said to his followers. It will do us good this Christmas season to consider honestly if our lives really help other people to be more sure about God and his unfailing love.

The little child lying in the manger of Bethlehem brought a new message to humanity. The Roman civilization was a worship of pomp and grandeur. And the Romans then set the model for the world. Into that world came the King of Kings in swaddling clothes, with a poor maid from Nazareth for a mother, cattle for companions and a cattleshed for a home. God's ways are not ours, nor are his standards like those of the sons of men. He often conveys the greatest spiritual reality through the feeblest of instruments. A poor virgin and a child in rags are not too low for him.

We often complain that our Churches suffer from want of capable leaders. There is a certain amount of justification for the complaint. Real leadership need not always come from the elite. After all, the illiterate shepherds came to worship the child Jesus long before the wise men from the East and they were the first to tell others about the Saviour of the world. The significance of the simplicity and homeliness of the events connected with our Lord's birth and childhood should not be lost sight of. They reversed the standards of the world. The life of Jesus on earth was a continuous challenge to snobbery. He was happy to have fishermen for his fellows, a woman of the street for his most faithful friend, and two thieves for his comrades at the last. With a divine reverence for the humble and lowly, He saw the inner value of the unattractive. This was one of the lessons the world needed when Jesus was born. This is one of the lessons the world needs today.

Thinking of swaddling clothes, the straw and the manger, the cattle and the shepherds with their rustic songs, men have often grown sentimental. We like to think of the swaddling clothes as tender pieces of silk befitting baby Jesus, the straw as soft and smooth grass and the maid of Nazareth with a halo around her head. And our great painters have all helped to mislead us. The child Jesus did not lie on a bed of down but on a handful of rough straw, the dried hay which we see our cattle eat every day. The boy Jesus grew up in a common carpenter's shop, eating the rough bread made at home by his mother. There is something holistic and sturdy about the picture of the young Jesus growing up in a carpenter's household doing his daily chores.

The child in the manger growing up slowly and quietly in a village home under the tender care of the Blessed Virgin and her carpenter husband has a clear message for the world today with its hurry, distractions, concerns and snobbery. The serenity of our Lord's life is a challenge and a rebuke to the hurry and the busy-bodyism of most people's life these days. That little child was the repository of the most wonderful gospel the world has ever received. Yet, to the best of our understanding, it is unconscious of it and content to grow up in wisdom and stature just like an ordinary child.

Jesus grew up being what his Father wanted him to be, thinking and doing what the Father wanted him to think

and do. That was the secret of his life. Being in tune with the infinite every moment of one's life is the secret of a joyful and fruit-bearing life. If we don't make time every morning and evening to consciously commune with God, our Father, there is surely something wrong with our lives. If we can't find time to do that, we should ask ourselves whither and wherefore all this?"

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

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EASTER

Easter is the most important festival of the Christian Church, commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on the third day after His death on the Cross of Calvary. It is held every year on the first Sunday after the first full moon which occurs on or next after March 21st, the vernal equinox, the day between Winter and Spring when the sun crosses the equator from south to north. The word itself was probably derived from the Anglo-saxon spring goddess, Eostre, whose pagan festival in Britain was superseded by the Christian festival of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as in the case of Christmas which also superseded a pagan festival which used to be celebrated by the Romans around that time.

Owing to its association with what is known as the 'Paschal Full Moon,' the date of Easter varies in the solar calendar (which depends on the sun's position in relation to the earth); and Easter might be any time between March 21st and April 25th. Several of the other important festivals of the Church, like Pentecost, for example, are fixed in relation to Easter and therefore their dates also vary accordingly. Many institutions which have to provide for the celebration of Holy Days consider it a blessing that some at least of the great festivals have fixed dates like, for example, Christmas – December 25, Epiphany – January 6, Holy Cross – September 14, etc.

Setting aside questions of history and dates, let us move on to a consideration of the spiritual significance of Easter for our own lives. To Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the other disciples who actually saw the Risen Christ, whose body could be touched and evidently bore the marks of the wounds that had been inflicted on him at the crucifixion, the resurrection brought confirmation for their faith in God, whom Jesus had taught them to regard as their loving heavenly Father. (See 1Peter: 18-21;Rom. 10:9)

It is good to remember that the risen Jesus did not appear to everyone, but to 'witnesses chosen by God' (Acts 10:41), 'those that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem' (Acts 12:31). The resurrection was not meant to compel belief in Jesus in anyone who had not responded to his teaching and his life of divine love. Caiaphas and many others who had been hostile or indifferent to the message of divine love that Jesus represented were not confronted by the risen Jesus; just as, earlier, during his earthly life, Jesus had refused to jump down from the pinnacle of the temple as a means to impress people about his being the Son of God (Matt: 4:5-7).

For those who have responded to the life and teaching of Jesus, the message of Easter is to be found summarized in St. Mathew's Gospel at very end. Jesus said to them: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and I am with you always, to the end of the world." After his encounter with the Risen Christ on the Damascus road, St. Paul describes his new life in his Epistle to the Galatians in words that may be appropriated by every Christian: "I have been crucified with Christ: it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." Letting the living Lord Jesus Christ live in us, and rule our lives, is our proper response to Easter.

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THE GOOD FRIDAY TRADITION

This article is a response to Mr. P.A. George's question in the Church Weekly dated August 20, 1989, whether Jesus was crucified on a Friday. The answer is a clear yes, in spite of what the writer in "The Plain Truth" is reported to have asserted.

The Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 26: 17 to 30; Mark 14: 12 to 26, and Luke 22: 7 to 21) take it for granted that our Lord's LAST SUPPER was the Jewish Passover meal of that year. But the Fourth Gospel presents a definitely different view. John 13: 1 & 2– "Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world... And during supper..." Again, in John 13: 27 – "Jesus said to him (Judas) 'what you are going to do, do quickly." The other disciples did not know why Jesus said this to him. Some actually thought that, because Judas held the money box, Jesus was telling him, "Go and buy what we need for the feast." If at the Last Supper one of the disciples thought that Jesus was asking Judas to buy things needed for the feast of the Passover, it is obvious that the supper they were then eating could not itself be the Passover meal. In fact, according to this passage, the Passover feast "of seven days" could not even have begun then; for, if it had begun, no Jew would think of buying anything after it, because buying and selling were strictly forbidden during the feast. The passages in John 18: 28 and 19: 14, 31 & 42 make it clear that not only the Last Supper, but also the arrest, the trial, crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus took place before the actual beginning of the feast of Passover.

The Passover lambs were killed by way of preparation for the Passover on Nisan 14. The feast proper began with the beginning of the next day (see Numb. 28: 16 & 17). It is necessary here to remember that the liturgical day began in the evening at 6 p.m. The chronology of the events, according to the Fourth Gospel, is as follows:-

Nisan 14: that is, from 6 p.m. Thursday to 6 p.m. Friday, was the day of preparation on which the Passover lambs were slaughtered. For Jesus, the day began with the Last Supper on Thursday evening and ended after the crucifixion and burial on Friday evening.

Nisan 15: that is, from 6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Saturday, was the first day of the Passover, on which the Passover meal was eaten – too late for our Lord to take part in it.

Nisan 16: that is, from 6 p.m. Saturday to 6 p.m. Sunday, was the second day of the Passover - the first day of the week - the day of the resurrection.

Let us remember that the Church's proclamation that "Jesus rose on the third day" does not involve any assertion that three full days, each of 24 hours duration, had passed between the death and resurrection of Jesus, as the writer in "The Plain Truth" seems to imagine.

To put the matter briefly, nothing that the writer in "The Plain Truth" is reported to have said proves that there were two Sabbaths in the week of the crucifixion of Jesus - one 'the regular weekly Sabbath' and the other a separate 'Annual Sabbath.' The statement in John 19: 31 – 'for Sabbath was a high day' – does not by itself justify the assumption that it was a Sabbath other than the regular Saturday, the seventh day of the week, which is what the word Sabbath really means.

In conclusion let me repeat that there is no valid reason why we should agree that the day on which Jesus was crucified was any other than a Friday.

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PETER'S DENIAL OF JESUS, A MEDITATION FOR HOMES

(Read St. Mark 14:27; St. John 18:15-27; 21:15-17)

It is commonly supposed that Peter denied Jesus because of his cowardice, because he was afraid of being arrested with Jesus. Most people, of course, admit that Peter was not a coward by nature; but they allege that on this occasion he was panic-striken and that cowardice mastered him for once. This is plausible; but a careful review of the events shows that this interpretation is rather superficial and that it does not account for all the facts.

Peter was with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. If the officers had any intention of arresting his followers, this was the most opportune moment for them. But, in spite of the fact that Peter cut off a soldier's ear, they did not arrest him then. Why, then, should Peter have been afraid that he would be arrested later? In any event, if Peter had any fear of being arrested, if he wanted to avoid trouble for himself, he would not have followed Jesus to the High Priest's courtyard and obtained entrance there through the other disciple's influence.

Even this might be explained away. It might be said that he got frightened and panicky only when the maid came and asked him the question. But then, why did he remain in the courtyard even after the maid had spoken to him and he had denied Jesus once? Surely a coward would. have escaped from the place immediately, but Peter remained there so as to be questioned not once but twice more.

No, cowardice and panic do not explain Peter's denial satisfactorily.

Then again, note the depth of Peter's sorrow when he recognizes his guilt. Such deep sorrow points not merely to a sense of failure due to momentary weakness, but to a sense of the guilt of deliberate sin. Peter was conscious not merely of failure due to weakness, but of a guilt of a more heinous nature.

The story of Peter's restoration also seems to point to a more awful breach between him and Jesus than is explained by panic or cowardice (John 21: 15-17). Jesus asks Peter not whether he has the faith or trust that will keep him above fear and panic in future. It is a much more poignant question that Jesus asks: "Do you love me, Peter? Am I at least as dear to you as an ordinary friend?" That question pierces Peter's heart and he breaks down, sobbing. It was not his courage that had left Peter after the arrest of Jesus but, strange as it may seem, it was his loyalty.

We notice that this was what Jesus had foreseen, also. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night" (Mark 14: 27). Perhaps Jesus might have added: " offended, because you will see me acting against your ardent expectations, in a way which will outrage your feelings. You will be offended and you will disown me."

If we carefully compare St. John's account of this incident of Peter's denial with that of St.Mark, we will notice a significant change that St. John makes. St. Mark as a rule thinks primarily of recording the events; and when St. John makes a change in any record we may be sure that he does so in order to eliminate ambiguity or to bring out more clearly the significance of the event. According to St. Mark, the maid asks Peter: "Were you not also with Jesus of Nazareth?" St. John alters this into: "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?" And makes Peter answer, "I am not." It does seem reasonable to believe that this is not a mere lie of a frightened man, but that it is the retort of a man who is not at peace with himself.

Peter had, in the beginning, left all and followed Jesus; his love was ardent enough to make him sacrifice everything for Jesus. Peter's loyalty to Jesus was even more deep-rooted than that of the other disciples, as a glance at the history of their relationship to Jesus would show. One of the severest tests of the faith of the disciples was the failure of their hope with regard to Jesus' establishment of the Kingdom.

Many deserted him; even a person like John the Baptist began to have doubts in his mind. It was at such a time of doubt and discouragement that Jesus asked the disciples the direct question: "Who say ye that I am?" Peter's faith was ardent enough even then to make him say: "Thou art the Messiah."

But at the next stage Peter's faith, too, was shaken. We remember how Jesus began to teach that His mission as the Messiah could be carried out only through His rejection, suffering and death; how Peter was scandalized by this, and how Jesus rebuked him saying: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter did not learn the lesson that Jesus was trying to teach him until after his denial. In spite of all

the warnings, Peter was like the other disciples, completely unprepared for what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane, the arrest and capture of Jesus. Hence his attempt to use the sword. Peter's faith in Jesus, however, did not fail even then, like the faith of his fellows.

Peter might have thought that something might still happen to put everything right. After all, what could be more appropriate and dramatic than that Jesus, standing bound and helpless before the high priest, should suddenly declare his Kingdom and power and throw all his enemies into confusion? That was perhaps why Peter followed Jesus to the high priest's house. But disappointment and disillusionment await him there; because, in the last analysis, Peter is following not the real Jesus, but the Jesus of his own imagination. His willingness to sacrifice everything for the sake of Jesus is still based not on a total, unconditional surrender to Jesus, but on the conviction that the plan that he (Peter) has in mind is quite right.

Here we have a fundamental distinction which, as Principal Lindsay points out, is what distinguishes idol worship from the worship of God. The idol worshipper very often sacrifices a great deal and undergoes much suffering, but it is he himself who decides what he should do, not God; he recognizes only himself as the master. This tendency is so common to all of us that we very seldom recognize its presence. Whether we call it self-reliance, self-satisfaction, self-assertiveness, or by any other of the various compounds of self, it has an element in it that makes true love, or true worship of God, impossible. And unless we go on recognizing its manifestations in us and surrendering it to God, it will lead us to the denial of love, and the denial of God, as it does in the case of Peter.

The hours of the night quietly pass. Jesus does not do any of the wonderful things he might do; and at last Peter, too, loses hope. He is scandalized and disappointed by the conduct of Jesus; he is "offended" in other words; and when the servant comes and questions him he repudiates the leadership of Jesus. It is not a question of merely failing his master, owing to panic or fear; it is a much more serious matter of becoming ashamed of his master and hence disowning him, not merely before others, but in his own heart. Denying with the lips before others, owing to fear and panic, is a comparatively small matter; it has happened in times of persecution to many sincere and timorous Christians. If that had been all that Peter did, his heart would still have been sound and, later on, would have been the principle of life within him.

But what he did was to deny Jesus in his heart, to repudiate his loyalty to his friend. That was the awful state in which Peter was and only the loving look of Jesus and the redemptive love coming out of Him could restore life to Peter's heart.

What happened in the friendship of Jesus seems to be happening in the case of many friendship groups and in many love marriages. Two people leave home for each other's sake and they begin life together with great ideals and enthusiasm, willing to sacrifice everything for each other. But gradually they begin to be scandalized by the real selves of each other. A's love for B is sincere and genuine, and capable of making and facing all opposition for B's sake. But the B of A's conception is not the real B. In other words, A loves not B but A's own conception of B. So the real B offends A and A is "disillusioned." Convention and respectability prevent an open rejection or denial; but A really denies B in the heart. That is the real trouble with many people. The lack of warmth in many homes is the result of the fact that the husband and wife have in their hearts denied each other as Peter denied Jesus. Whether they deny each other or not in public makes very little difference. If they have denied each other in their hearts, then life has begun to be a burden to them; and if they long for death it is but natural.

This is the tragedy of many love marriages. But for Christian lovers the last word need not be tragedy; on the contrary, for them, this despair itself can be the basis of a new hope and an altogether new life, because this temporary denial of each other and the consequent strain in their lives can open their eyes to the lingering vestiges of self-regard which might otherwise have remained hidden, and atrophied their capacity for love. Self is the canker of love and the sooner it is discovered the better it is for everyone.

The story of Peter shows the two steps that have to be taken in this matter. The first step is genuine sorrow for such a situation and the positive desire to get out of it. Fatalism is the excuse of those who do not like to really repent of their pride and selfishness, and to work for a new life. The look of Jesus sends a thrill into Peter's heart; he goes out and weeps. That is the first step; sorrow for what has happened and a longing to set things right.

The second step is Peter's answer to Jesus at the sea of Tiberias. Peter still does not understand the mystery of Jesus' plan; but he once and for all accepts Jesus' hand of friendship and once and for all decides to be with Jesus whatever be the course of events. "I do not claim to

understand this Jesus, I do not know what He is going to do; but I trust in his love and, for better or for worse, I shall be on his side till the end of my life."

This language is strangely reminiscent of the language in which, at the wedding service, a husband and a wife promise to be loyal to each other. No two human beings can, by their own right, claim this kind of loyalty from each other. But the saints, who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit drew up the language of the marriage service, used these words in the faith that the bride and bridegroom are brought together by Christ himself, and that their common loyalty to him is sufficient guarantee for the permanence of their loyalty to each other. That is why marriage is not a mere contract, but a sacrament, different not only in degree but in kind from all other human fellowships.

Blessed are those couples who, even when inexplicable circumstances tempt them sorely to deny each other, or to suspect each other's love, do hold firmly on to the fact that it was God and the love that He kindled that had brought them together, and who, by their increasing openness to Christ's love and guidance, help each other on in the path of love and duty. To them, problems will be only helps to learn new facts and to receive new blessings, and life itself will be a continuous discovery and a growing joy.

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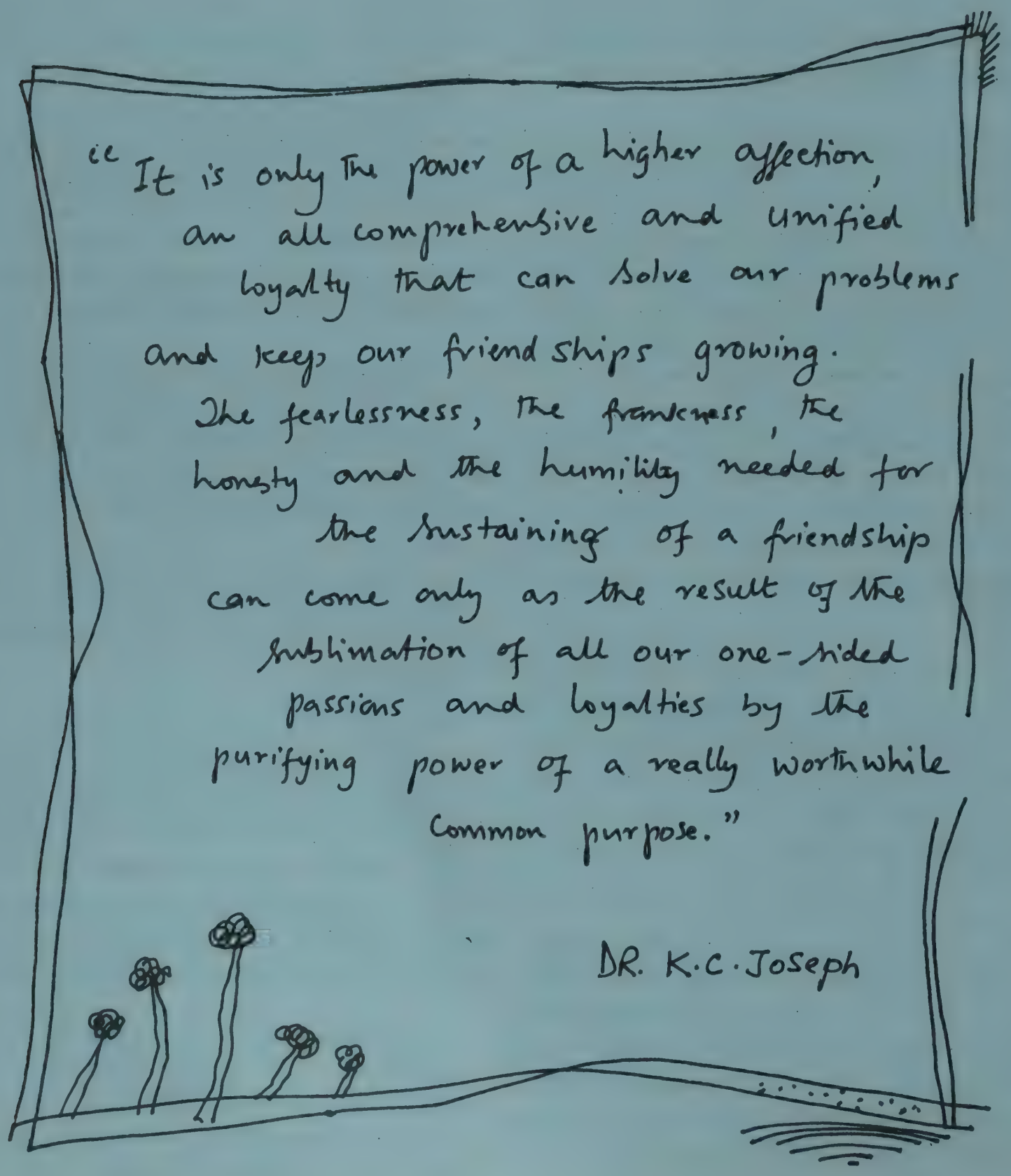
"It is only the power of a higher affection,
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common purpose."
DR. K.C. Joseph

RESENTMENT: THE ENEMY WITHIN

Some of you might have come across a beautiful little book entitled, "Fighters Ever," by Peter Howard, the leader writer of the journal, Sunday Express. That is a book about a group of Christians with whom this journalist happened to come into contact. It seems to me that the word "fighter" is a good description of a living Christian. There are ever so many evils that Christians have to fight against in this modern world. We have to fight against social inequalities, we have to fight against political oppression, we have to fight against economic exploitation and we have to fight against dishonesty everywhere.

It is interesting that this word "fighter" was used by Christians to describe themselves long before men became conscious of these evils against which we are now busy fighting. The men of old were not aware of these foes but still they fought — they fought against the foes within themselves. They took this business of fighting against the foes within so seriously that they wrote books about it and drew up rules and regulations for the training of men for this fight.

I wonder whether many people nowadays have read a book like, "The Spiritual Combat." That is all monkish nonsense, we say. We are so busy fighting the evil in the outside world that we scarcely pay any attention to the fight that ought to go on within. And yet, experience shows us that no one will ever succeed in his fight against evils outside himself unless he seriously takes up the fight against the evils in himself. In the early days of the Second World War, the French nation boasted of its brilliant army and the Maginot Line. They were confident that they would be able to fight the enemy from without. But they had enemies within and, when the time came, they were betrayed into defeat by these enemies within.

Tonight I would like us to think of one of our worst enemies within — resentments. Resentment: in that one word we see the greatest enemy of our happiness and of our usefulness. I believe there is no other sin which is so inimical to spiritual efficiency and which, on such a vast scale, robs people of their power to help others. And yet there are many who do not see the need to find out if any resentment is lying buried in their lives and making them ineffective.

The reason is that resentment is one of those subtle sins which hide themselves from their victim. A very experienced missionary has listed some of the signs of the presence of this enemy of the soul. If you are willing to betray another, if you desire to punish or requite another, if you are interested in telling tales about another, if you are inclined to accuse another, if you find delight in reporting undesirable things about the other person, if you feel satisfaction when the other person commits a mistake or is proved wrong, if you feel unhappy when the other person gets some advancement in life, if you want to avoid the other person as far as possible, if you find delight in opposing whatever the other person says, you may be under the impression that there is nothing wrong with you, but you are surely a victim of some resentment.

However, this evening I am not proposing to go into further details of how we can find out our resentments and fight them; I would like us to think for a few minutes how we may guard ourselves against the formation of resentments.

I think resentments are developed in one of two ways:

1). by being offended
2) by being hurt or aggrieved

We are offended when our pride or our sense of self-importance is touched. Someone might have overlooked us or slighted us or mocked at us and we feel irritated and angry. This anger settles down and develops into a resentment. Being piqued or offended is regarded as quite natural by some people; but most Christians regard it as the sin of pride. It is the other type of self-centredness that very often passes off unrecognised as the sin it really is — that is, being hurt or aggrieved. There was a time when I used to regard being hurt as a very noble quality. I'm afraid there are people who think they are hurt because of their love. This is self-deception. We are hurt when we think primarily about ourselves — desiring to be loved and cared for — and when we think primarily of getting. Of course, as Dr. Larsen points out, to love also involves a desire to get, otherwise it would be mere charity; but it makes all the difference whether giving or getting occupies the first place.

Well, whether we feel offended or we feel hurt — in both these states of mind, I think, we are self-centred and the message of God's love cannot effectively pass through us. Both these make us ineffective and, if we want to be used in the work of God's Kingdom, we should fight them and be above being offended or being hurt. The question is, how can we do it?

I suggest that we can overcome these temptations in one or more of three ways:

a) by finding an excuse for the other person

b) by seeing that the blame is really not so much the other person's as ours

c) by seeing in the situation the other person's real need and by going out to help the other person

There are two incidents in the life of our Lord which are very significant in this context. First, we remember the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, where our Lord expects His disciples to watch with Him, but when He comes back after His secret prayer He finds them asleep. The words, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" vibrate with intense feeling. Our Lord was sorely tempted to feel hurt; but He brushes the temptation away and turns the situation into a call for sympathy and help. He sees their weakness and finds an excuse for them. "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." How good it will be if we can all find an excuse for those who hurt us and turn our hurt into active sympathy.

Again, in the scene of the crucifixion, when the soldiers mocked at our Lord, He might have become angry and offended; instead, we see His heart going out in sympathy. He finds an excuse for them and prays on their behalf; "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing." Again, He overcomes the temptations and turns the situation into an occasion for sympathy.

In the case of our Lord, He was absolutely blameless, and so there might have been some excuse even if He did become hurt or offended. How little justification we have in getting hurt or offended, seeing that in no situation are we wholly blameless! In our case, it is not enough even if we find an excuse for the other party. We have to go further. In every situation, part of the blame is ours; but we are so clever that when we find an excuse for the other party, we find one for ourselves, too. That spoils the whole thing. We should instead learn to see our part in the creation of that situation.

In this connection, I am reminded of a saying of the saintly Christian who started the fight against the slave trade in America and Britain. He used to say that good people also have a share in the responsibility for the evil that bad people do. How eager we are very often to claim part of the merit of a good deed done by someone else. Why should we not learn to take upon ourselves part of the blame of any evil that is done within our knowledge? We shall never really understand the sin-bearing and atoning work of Christ until we learn to share the blame of sins committed by our brothers. If Christ, the sinless, identified Himself with the sinner, how much do we sinners deserve to be identified with other sinners!

I wonder if all of us have learnt the significance of Christ's saying, "Woe unto those who cause one of these my little ones to stumble." Very often we may not ourselves stumble. But are we sure that we do not cause others to do so? For example, we may not lose our temper and we may be proud of our placidity. But do we think of the thousand and one occasions when we cause another good soul to lose his temper? Do we then feel superior and point a finger at him? God's unrelenting judgement is upon us: "Better it were for him to tie a millstone round his neck and cast himself into the sea!"

We cause others to stumble not only by doing things, but also by failing to do things. When some omission of ours results in another person being upset and in that person doing wrong, we should, if we are honest, hold ourselves responsible for his stumbling also.

However, this is not my main theme tonight. When we are faced with a situation that tends to make us hurt or offended, let us try to find an excuse for the other person, and let us direct the searchlight within ourselves and find out our own responsibility so that the situation may be a call to us not to accuse the other but to seek forgiveness for ourselves.

Then, finally, there is the other situation in which, after doing both these things, we still find that the other person is to blame. In such cases, I suppose what we should do is to see the great need of the other person and to try to help him The personal sting goes when we realise that it is God's own love that the other person is flouting and what the other person needs is help not to behave better to us but to respond to God's love. How can we help him?

Sometimes you come across a person who takes pleasure in opposing you or in proving that you are wrong. It is very hard to resist the temptation to get irritated. But the situation need not make us unhappy or develop into a resentment if we remind ourselves that our main concern is not to be glorified but to glorify God. If that person's criticism helps us to become better, well, accept it -- even if we feel that the criticism could have been given in a more loving and helpful manner. If our purpose is not to glorify ourselves, we need be sorry only if others do not point out our mistakes and shortcomings and leave us ignorant of them. If the other person's criticism is false, well, it will pass by us without affecting us in the least, provided we do not seek honour from one another.

All things work together for good to them that love God; and whose only chief desire in life is to glorify God.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

There is hardly any character in the whole of the Bible who has aroused greater indignation in the minds of men than Judas Iscariot. The name of that most unfortunate man has met with all kinds of curses ever since the day on which he hanged himself. And probably he deserves as much derision and contempt as he has got or even more, for his crime was such. He turned traitor to the most loving man who has ever lived in this world of ours. Unloving though we are to a great extent, there is not much else more revolting to us than faithlessness to love. One who can turn traitor to a friend is the last person with whom we would like to associate.

Judas Iscariot's guilt was great. And no amount of remorse can really atone for it. Yet, when we pause and consider, we feel the pity of it all. Judas has been the most unfortunate man in the long history of humanity. Robert Burns once said that he could weep for the devil chained in the darkest corner of hell. We have more reason to weep for Judas Iscariot.

Let us carry our minds back some 2000 years and try to reconstruct the story of this hopeful young man joining the party which followed our Lord. We may picture to ourselves a very intelligent young man, shrewd and practical in outlook, but thoroughly unsatisfied with the world he saw around him. He saw much inefficiency and waste in the lives of the people he knew — waste in money and things that contribute to physical comforts; but also waste in mental energy and the capacity to work towards a great end, to achieve good and noble things. There was hate between the Jews and the gentiles, hate between the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman government, hate between the pharisees and the sadducees, dissatisfaction among the proselytes, and confusion everywhere. Judas Iscariot saw a vision, in his own way, of a changed world order, a new system of society, a new form of government, where there was no dissipation of energy, no waste, but where everything contributed to greater happiness and a fuller manhood.

Of a quiet, solemn evening, looking at the vast panorama before him, the setting sun playing upon the thick cedar leaves, the ever-changing spectrum of light agitating his very heartstrings and opening his eyes to a whole world of life and colour, Judas Iscariot used to wonder at the quick-changing play of the lights and shadows of life and to yearn for a new world order. And deep down in his heart he longed for a companion with whom he could share these secret thoughts. He had come into contact with many prospective friends, but he could never feel wholly at home with any of them. They had been either too prosaic and commonplace for him to share his deepest ideals with or they had been too superficial and fantastic for his extremely realistic spirit to find camaraderie in their company. So he had gone on from day to day, communing with his own spirit and feeling at times extremely lonely in a world of indifferent men and women.

Thus nursing a secret thought in his heart, he lived in Kerioth [Josh 15:25] (for so, I am told, was called his native place, which gave him the title Ish-Kerioth). And, one day, he heard rumours about a new prophet risen in Israel, who preached a new world order, a Kingdom of God. On further inquiry, he found out that the new prophet was a carpenter of Nazareth who had, for about 30 years, done his work and earned his living. A thought flashed through Judas' mind. Here was a man after his own heart, who was no mere visionary. Of course, there was something of the visionary in Jesus; all carpenters are visionaries to a certain extent because they are artists. But this man had worked with steel chisel and wooden hammer and had fed his mother and some cousins for a long time. So there was no doubt that he was in touch with the facts of life.

Judas at once decided to go and hear this man preaching on the hillside. Soon he became a regular at the open-air meetings Jesus held. The reality and the dead seriousness of Jesus' words impressed him and he felt an increasing attraction for this young leader. He heard him with ever-increasing zeal. Jesus, whose eyes never overlooked anything, noted the growing enthusiasm in this man. But he allowed the man's interest to grow without interference. For he knew that Judas was a strong-minded man and that he would never surrender himself to the influence of anyone else except out of personal love, voluntarily imparted.

And things turned out as Jesus foresaw. One evening, as the crowds were dispersing after a meeting on the hillside, and as Jesus was turning away towards the secluded hilltop to pray, he felt a slight tug on his sleeves and, turning around, he saw Judas. Judas said to him, in simple words, "Rabbi, will you let me follow you? I wish to live with you hereafter."

That was the wonderful beginning of Judas Iscariot's

friendship with Jesus — a friendship which, if Shakespeare or some other great dramatist had desired, could have been made the theme of one of the greatest tragedies of the world — for, tragic its end truly was, pitiful and terrible. We need not waste words describing Judas' end. That tragic night in which he supped with his friend and master and went out to the enemy's camp will be regarded as the darkest night in human history.

Cool and determined, he looked at the face of the friend whom he had once loved and, without even a tremour in his heart, he slipped out of the room into the awful solitude and darkness of the world outside. Behind him he left the little band of eager disciples sitting around the supper table, bewildered and dumbfounded at the extreme gravity of their master's face and the unprecedented solemnity of his words. Before him stretched the limitless expanse of night, the terror of which was equalled only by the dreadful night in his own soul. And there he was, cool and determined, without a pang of remorse, without any misgivings about the strange and terrible mission he was on. He was on his way to betray the friend and master who had loved him and who continued to love him and longed to help him. Judas going out of that supper room is one of the great enigmas of human history.

Judas' betrayal of Jesus: how did it happen? How did it happen that, having lived for years together with the best man that the world had seen, the most loving friend any man had ever known, Judas found it possible to betray him? Why did Judas become a party to Jesus' murder? How could he? These are questions that puzzle us, especially if we have realised, to some small extent at least, how loving Jesus was. But we must try to answer them for we have, perhaps, no greater problem in the world than the problem of friendship.

An argument that has often been put forward to explain Judas' action is that it was only a mistake, owing to ignorance of Jesus' mind. Some people say that, far from planning to injure Jesus, what Judas wanted was to draw out the latent powers in him by putting him in a compelling situation. According to them, Judas seems to have thought that when the Jews came to arrest him and to crucify him Jesus could not but make use of all the great powers that God had bestowed on Him and that would hasten the establishment of that great kingdom which they had all been waiting for.

This seems possible. But it does not explain all the facts. Jesus had made it unmistakably clear to them, especially in the discourses of the last few days, that the Kingdom that he had come to establish was not of this world and that His conquest of the world was to be through love alone. But, even granting that Judas had not been able fully to understand Jesus' ideas, it is absolutely incomprehensible that he should have, if he had any love for Jesus, plotted with people who were obviously out to kill him.

We must discuss also that other and more common suggestion that Judas' treachery was just the result of the bribe of 30 pieces of silver that he received from the Jews. Judas was certainly not above corruption. He knew the value of money too well to treat it lightly. And his inordinate love of money was no secret among the disciples. St. John even calls him a thief. But, with all this, we may be certain that just those 30 pieces of silver in themselves could not have made Judas play the traitor to his friend and master. After all, there was in Judas something that was really great, something we may never find in the mere slave of mammon. In the beginning he was able to recognise greatness in Jesus so as to be compelled to follow him and, in the end, when he had committed the sad act of betrayal, he was a big enough man to fling back the bribe in the face of his tempters and go away and hang himself.

We cannot be certain about all the impulses that worked in Judas' mind, but whatever else there was or was not, we feel sure that Judas could not have betrayed Jesus, so wilfully and deliberately as he did, if he had any friendship or love left for Jesus. He had loved Jesus once, he had admired him; else he would not have followed him; for, after all, Jesus had no money or position to give him. If it was power and position that Judas wanted he could have more profitably turned to the Roman government than to a poor, itinerant preacher. Judas had loved and admired Jesus once and the question is: how was it that his heart became so completely estranged from the ever-loving heart of Jesus? How was it that he lost all his capacity for love and tenderness, how was it that he turned so sour and implacable?

The answer to these questions will throw much light on our own friendships. In whatever mysterious ways our friendships begin, experience tells us that friendship cannot continue to exist and to grow between two people unless they have common ideals in life and a common purpose in the working out of which they can whole-heartedly cooperate with each other. And this common purpose must be a really worthwhile one and big enough to draw out all their latent capacities

and thus to give the fullest development to their personalities. It is not uncommon to find two people coming together, sometimes because of a common interest in some pursuits or sometimes because of an inexplicable attraction towards each other. And after the first glow of emotional enthusiasm, which may last for years in some cases, they somehow cease to have any attachment to each other and the friendship becomes just a thing of the past.

The reason is not always quite clear. Often it is a sense of futility or disillusionment, greed of some sort, unsatisfied personal pride or even jealousy. But if you analyse such estranged friendships you can always find that the root of the trouble was the lack of a common purpose, really worthwhile and big enough, which could stimulate, redirect and control all their enthusiasms and affections. Most of us are unhappy, ineffective and incapable of real and sustained friendship because our personalities are divided and our motives vague and changing like a chameleon, according to our moods.

It is only the power of a higher affection, an all-comprehensive and unified loyalty that can solve our problems and keep our friendships growing. The fearlessness, the frankness, the honesty and the humility needed for the sustaining of a friendship can come only as a result of the sublimation of all our one-sided passions and loyalties by the purifying power of a really worthwhile common purpose.

Jesus had, always before him, the supreme purpose of the Kingdom of God or, in other words, he was always concerned with the working out of his Heavenly Father's will. And the basis of his life was complete self-surrender and humility. Judas, too, certainly had an ideal as all of us have, whether we know it or not, but evidently Judas', ideal was not in line with the ideal, that Jesus had. So they could not possibly keep together for ever unless some changes came - for, as the prophet said of old, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" There were only two alternatives before them. Either Jesus should give up his ideal and accept Judas, or Judas should surrender his and accept Jesus.

Jesus knew that the objective he had before him was different from that of the people who came into contact with him, and many a time he was tempted to make peace with the world by compromising. But he knew, too, that the Salvation of all the world lay in the Heavenly Father's all-wise, all-loving, and all-comprehensive will which was his ideal and so, for the sake of all that was good and noble and worth having, he refrained from making any compromise. He knew that although compromise seemed to be the easier way, it could not take anyone far. And so, Judas had either to give up his pet ideals and cherished ambitions and accept Jesus', ideals and plans or to drift away from him. This latter he did and, almost before he realised the full significance of it, he who had been a friend of Jesus became one of his bitterest enemies.

We all have some ideals in life; yes, even those who say, "Oh, we have no theory of life, we are just getting on somehow." None of us can help living for something, whether we are conscious of our objective or not. And the only relevant question in our friendships, in our corporate life, is: what is our object in life? Is it self-satisfaction in some form or is it self-giving for the working out of God's purposes of love? Is the basis of our life self-centred ambition or is it humility and love?

Now, if we are building our friendships, our life, on anything smaller than the all-wise will of God, we shall learn, sooner or later, that we cannot keep together. The problem of friendship is the same as the problem of life. Mere words will not do. Even emotional attachment will fade away unless sustained by something more vital. Life teaches us that our friendships cannot continue to exist and to grow except by the strength of a sustained and self-abandoning devotion to the service of eternal Reality. A common love of God and a common devotion to His glorious purposes of love at any cost alone can give us the humility, the patience, the frankness and the reverence for one another so necessary for the continuance and growth of friendship.

Just a few words in closing, about a new factor that has come into human history since the day of Pentecost, a new factor which we have to reckon with in all our attempts to face life and its problems. Jesus lived as the Great Friend and his disciples set much store on his Friendship. He died, rose again and vanished from their sight, and His disciples felt that their great friend was gone. But on the day of Pentecost, as Jesus Himself promised, they experienced a new influence in their lives, a power, a personal incoming.

This new influence, which they called the Holy Ghost, gave them an altogether new sense of the presence and impact on their lives of the friend who had vanished away from their sight. Their friend was now no longer visible, but they found that He was with

them permeating their personality, transforming them, directing and sustaining them to the extent that they willingly submitted themselves to His control and trustfully rested themselves on His love. The friend, who had loved them and instructed them now became their in-dwelling friend, their ever-present, never-failing companion, who made other friendships valuable to them and possible, too. Jesus became the common factor in all their friendships, keeping them in the one purpose of the Kingdom of God and sustaining them by his love and power. The more they loved him and opened their hearts to his influence and control, the more their capacity to love and to be loved increased. They continued in love and fellowship. And the heathen looked on in wonder and astonishment and said, "Behold, how these Christians love one another."

This experience of Christ's friendship which transformed them for the world and transformed the world for them was what characterised the early Christians as they went through the pagan world. And this experience has ever since become the note of the lives of an increasing number of Christ's friends, who let Him have His way with them. Today, Christ is offering us this transforming friendship -- a friendship which will transform life for us and provide a real basis for our friendships. And we need only to accept it. So the question finally comes to this: shall we surrender our lives to Christ and trustfully accept the friendship He offers or shall we turn away like Judas Iscariot?

"The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

* * * * *

K.C. CHACKO

With the passing away of Mr. K.C. Chacko, at the age of 63, on Monday 15 September 1947, the earthly ministry of one of the greatest sons of the Christian Church in India came to an end. Endowed with an exceptional gift for friendship, Mr. Chacko was a true Christian friend to hundreds of people who had the good fortune to come into contact with him, and to all of them it is a hard struggle now to adjust themselves to life without his bodily presence among them. He lived, moved and had his being in God, and to know him was to be sure of God's unfailing love. Meek and gentle like his Master, Mr. Chacko always preferred to work behind the curtains. And only those who cared to see beneath the semblance of things realized that he was the man behind several Christian movements and institutions started in South India during the last forty or forty-five years. Truly it may be said that we have only begun to see the fruits of his ministry. The Union Christian College is only one of them.

Before he and his friends started the Union Christian College in 1921, Mr. Chacko had been for several years in the Madras Christian College, first as a student and then as a member of the teaching staff. The impression he made on the life and work of that institution during those years may be gathered from what Mrs. Hogg told the present writer when he first met her after joining the Madras Christian College as a student. Hearing that I had come from Alwaye, she asked me about Mr. Chacko and told me, "When Mr. Chacko left this college, we did not know what we could do here without him." In association with the late Dr. William Skinner, the then Principal of the Madras Christian College, and the late Dr. L.P. Larsen, the well-known Danish missionary, Mr. Chacko was one of the most effective Christian workers among students and others in Madras at that time. His room in the Madras Central Y.M.C.A. was a home of peace and encouragement to many "who longed to do God's will, yet stumbled continually." He was chiefly responsible for first starting the S.C.M. Camps in the Madras-Vellore area. It was his interest in humanitarian work that brought into existence the Madras Christian College Brotherhood, once a very active organisation engaged in social uplift work.

A younger brother of Mr. K.C. Mammen Mappillai, Mr. Chacko was the fifth son of Kandathil Cherian Mappillai and was popularly known as "Thayyile Kutty," a pet name which to the younger generation naturally became "Kuttichayan." After passing the matriculation examination from the M.D. Seminary, Kottayam, he joined the Madras Christian College, where he was a contemporary and close friend of Dr. John Matthai, Dr. George Matthai and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Taking the M.A.Degree in Philosophy in 1908 with a high rank in the University, he joined the staff of the Madras Christian College as Lecturer in Philosophy. He was a great success as a teacher of Logic; but he was an even greater success as a Christian friend to his students. He laboured night and day, visiting them in hostels and homes and passing on to them the message of the love of Christ. His ceaseless activity told on his health and in 1911 he fell seriously ill with an attack of galloping consumption. The doctors gave up all hope of his recovery and told his relatives and friends that he might live only for a few weeks more. But he did not give up hope. He rested his mind on the love of God and just continued to do day by day what he felt God wanted him to do. To the great surprise of everyone, when the same doctor who had said that he might live only for a few weeks examined him after about three months, there was a miraculous change. Here was a real miracle and Mr. Chacko never forgot what it taught him: that God's love and resources were absolutely sufficient to meet all his needs in all circumstances.

Mr. Chacko was still in bed as a convalescent when Dr. John R. Mott visited India on his whirlwind campaign for a revival of the Christian Church and for the establishment of inter-denominational institutions which might help the various Churches to unite together in presenting the Christian Gospel in its many-sided fullness to non-Christian India. From his sick-bed in Madras, Mr. Chacko invited Dr. Mott's attention to the unhappy divisions in the ancient Syrian Church and as a result of their exchange of ideas Dr. Mott convened a meeting in Calcutta of the leaders of various denominations, including the Malankara Syrian Church and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. In the wake of the new enthusiasm for inter-denominational cooperation engendered at that Conference, some plans were made to start a Union Christian High School in Travancore. The idea did not bear immediate fruit, but Mr. Chacko continued to cherish it in his thoughts and prayers.

After a fairly long period of convalescence spent at Madanapalle, Mr. Chacko rejoined duty in the Madras Christian College. He had been absent for well nigh three years and he had to gather up the broken threads of his varied activities. He could no longer be the energetic young man, flying about the different parts of Madras on a

bicycle, taking the message of Christ's love to needy souls. Only half a lung was left for him and he had to be very careful about his health. With a crippled body like that, and a compelling vision of the sacrifice that needed to be made, any other man might have become unhappy. But far from chafing against the limitations of his body, Mr. Chacko actually thanked God whole-heartedly for thus leading him unmistakably to the particular type of work he was destined to do. Seeing the hand of God clearly guiding him, he canalised the tremendous energy of his vigorous mind to the work of intercession and of helping individuals and groups to learn to pray. Thus began the long series of "prayer-helps" and prayer meetings in his room for which hundreds of people are now grateful to God.

The idea of the Union Christian High School had to be abandoned, but in its place Mr. Chacko started working on the idea of a Union Christian College. Gradually he gathered a small group of enthusiastic young men around him, and in 1919 he and they together came forward with a practical scheme for a new residential college in the working of which the Malankara Syrian Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the Church of India in the Diocese of Travancore and Cochin could cooperate. The Churches did not see their way to according official cooperation; but they agreed to watch the experiment with interest and sympathy. The group had no money with them, but their earnestness of purpose and faith in God gradually won them friends, and money came in by and by. At last, on 8 June 1921, the Union Christian College was opened in a rented building in Alwaye.

The story of Mr. Chacko's indefatigable perseverance and his unremitting labours to develop the small institution thus inaugurated into an effective instrument in God's hands, and of how year after year the College continued to grow in spite of all sorts of obstacles in its way, reads like a fairy tale. For, as someone pointed out recently, it is not difficult to found a college to be called after oneself when one has large sums of money got by all manner of means and waiting to be squandered somehow, but to set about the stupendous task of building up a college out of nothing, with neither silver nor gold of one's own, that requires courage and faith. To us it seems that Mr. Chacko took a great risk in setting out to realise his dreams of a first-grade residential college. But, if we asked him how he dared to take the risk, he would have smilingly told us that there was no risk at all. For, as he was always reminding us, "All the infinite resources of God are available to those who only seek to do His will." The silver and gold needed for the College, which Mr. Chacko was convinced after years of prayerful consideration was in the line of God's will, were in the hands of God's children. He was never ashamed of asking for money for a worthy cause, because to him money was one of the talents entrusted with men by God to be spent for His work. Some have money; others have energy, or talents or vision. If everyone gives according to his ability, then there will be the men and the money needed for any project. It would also be everybody's common concern. What a solution to the financial problems of struggling institutions! Mr. Chacko was fond of saying that having God with us is like having any of the digits from 1 to 9 at the beginning of a number of zeros. A large number of us are like a large number of zeros which have no value, but when at the head of us there is a digit, how valuable we become!

Mr. Chacko's unshakeable faith in God, and his conviction that if the College was open to the total rule of God no power on earth could shake it, helped the College through many a crisis. "If the College is fulfilling God's plan for it nothing can destroy it. If it is not fulfilling God's purpose, let it go to pieces tomorrow; it is not worthwhile trying to keep it. Our concern should be only whether we are doing our best to see and do what God wants to be done. His is the burden and we can rest on Him"— this was Mr. Chacko's attitude during the many crises that the College has had to face.

Mr. Chacko was slow in making up his mind about things; sometimes he took so much time to make decisions that those who worked with him were irritated. But once he felt sure about a course of action he went ahead of all his comrades in the execution of it. A friend of his once said, "When Mr. Chacko is convinced that a certain thing should be done, he doesn't mind whoever is inconvenienced or whatever amount of money is spent until it is done." This habit of his might have been a great trial to those who worked with him but for the fact that his profound reverence for the personalities of others kept him unreservedly willing to respect the convictions of others and not to coerce them to say or do anything different from what they thought right in the situation. He only wanted to be sure that laziness or indifference should not stand in the way of the fulfilment of God's work.

Mr. Chacko's tenacity of purpose has seemed almost terrific to those who have had the privilege of cooperating with him from day to day, especially at times of crisis. Once he felt convinced that a certain scheme or course of action was in the line of God's will, he set about to fulfil it with an indefatigable determination which reminded one of the Furies in Greek tragedies - although with this total

difference that their motive was wholly evil whereas his motive was wholly good. This quality, the perversion of which manifests itself in some people as the implacability of self-assertive vindictiveness, was dedicated in the personality of Mr. Chacko to the effective execution of noble ideas in the service of God. In all my experience, I have not come across a more formidable person to have on the opposite side in any case of opposing movements. This quality in him was redeemed and sublimated completely for the purpose of the Kingdom of God because, firstly he was always open to be convicted of any sin or error, secondly he was always absolutely willing to have his plans or course of action modified or abandoned in the light of any new ideas from any source which he always gracefully welcomed, thirdly he had such a profound reverence for the personalities of others that he never forced his will on others and fourthly he never acted until his fellow-workers also got the conviction that any course of action was the right one in the circumstances. He waited patiently, discussed questions threadbare, had no fear that feelings of enthusiasm might be damped, and acted only with coolness of heart and balance of judgement. But he went forward with tenacity and determination, undaunted by lions in the way and undismayed by setbacks, until either the object was achieved or he got the conviction that the cause was to be abandoned.

The principle of united thinking and united action thus envisaged was the basis of the Fellowship method which became a distinctive feature of all activities in which Mr. Chacko had a share. The members of a fellowship of Mr. Chacko's conception deliberately refrained from making decisions and acting as individuals in isolation, but always functioned as a team unitedly waiting on God for guidance and making decisions corporately. While helping individuals to discover and discard any self-centred tendencies in their thinking and feeling, the Fellowship method, based on the certainty of God's answer to any prayer of 'two or three' who agreed to ask in Christ's name, stimulated and sustained the faith which alone led to fruitful and effective action. Where individuals are apt to be weak, or wavering, or self-centred, or one-sided, a Fellowship so sustains and disciplines them as to make possible a truer discernment of God's will and a deeper appropriation of the power to hold on to it. Even in the so-called trivial matters of every day life, Mr. Chacko always faithfully adhered to this principle of corporate action. His strength was that he would not do anything unless there was at least one other fellow-believer who believed with him that a particular course of action was in the line of God's will. What a challenge he was to married men and women and groups who found it difficult to submit to the discipline of corporate life!

The Fellowship method was no strain to Mr. Chacko as it very often is to people who have not entered into the spirit of it. Far from getting impatient with differences of opinion and differences of temperament, Mr. Chacko actually welcomed them because to him each divergent opinion and each difference in temperament added to the richness of the common life - provided, of course, that all were honestly wanting to do God's will. Mr. Chacko took it for granted that wanting to do God's will was the only thing that any sane human being could consider worthwhile. Anyone who had any other motive would be a drag and a problem in Fellowship life; but then he too needed help and where could he get it except in a Fellowship? Men were more important to Mr. Chacko than measures.

Mr. Chacko's profound reverence for the personalities of others showed itself nowhere so clearly as it did in the way he dealt with the many who came to him for counsel. He never yielded to the temptation, that even some very good people have, to decide what God's will was for others. When people came to him for help, he deliberately refrained from what many "spiritual directors" do with good consciences. He gave his whole attention to the need; but he was as much a learner as the person who needed counsel; the counsel had to come from God Himself. Mr. Chacko knew that the only spiritual truth that helped you was what you yourself discovered and that, if you waited long enough on God, willing to learn, He would reveal it to you. The true work of the spiritual director was to "prepare the way of the Lord." Mr. Chacko tried to stem the tide of a tendency in modern life to shirk the burden of thinking and to live on the plane of feeling and impulses which come naturally and spontaneously, but which are not always unmistakable guides. Again and again he made people think out things thoroughly instead of making decisions in accordance with feelings of the moment.

Mr. Chacko's remarkable insight into character stood him in good stead in helping others. With surprising foresight he warned people of coming events and of the consequences of their thoughtless actions. But he never tried to judge. He was fully conscious that only God's Holy Spirit could really convince a man of any error in his ways and direct him in the right path. Mr. Chacko's one desire when he met people was that he should decrease and Christ should increase in their lives. Those who moved closest to him felt that his death was just the logical sequence of a life of sustained life-abnegation.

Mr. Chacko always took even the slightest problems

of others very seriously. He knew that if any small aspect was carelessly ignored that would be a block in the way of the final solution. To some people this was a bit embarrassing. But to others this gave confidence that he would not ignore or slight any of their fears or opinions. No one got any ready-made advice from Mr. Chacko. But anyone who took a need to this great saint was sure to go to him again. Mr. Chacko's genuine interest in people and his unostentatious courtesy made everyone feel at home with him. And then, in an atmosphere free from any strain, they poured out to him everything in their heart without any fear of being condemned or exposed. With deep sympathy and insight he led them on to the presence of Christ and continued to support them until they got their answers from the only source from which true answers come. It was a miracle how Mr. Chacko succeeded in keeping his personality in the background all the time, but saw to it that no one went away from him hopeless. He gave himself so wholeheartedly to those who took their problems to him, that sometimes even they were surprised that he could take such pains to understand their problems and help them through. He did not mind spending time and energy in order to be able to go the whole way with those who confided in him.

Mr. Chacko was an unmarried man, but he was able to understand the intricate and difficult problems of married life. From couples who gladly shared with him their intimate problems of domestic life he got enough information for him to understand the unshared problems of other couples and he helped them in ways which often surprised them.

Mr. Chacko not only gave his friendship to others unstintingly but he also longed for their friendship himself. He enjoyed human comradeship so much that he was genuinely grateful to anyone who went to meet him. But he had none of the possessiveness which characterises most affectionate hearts, and spoils many a friendship. He had learnt that the secret of all lasting friendships was a real freedom from possessiveness. It was his firm conviction, born of actual experience, that for two friends the only effective way of being truly and increasingly each other's was for both of them to be truly and increasingly Christ's. In its own strength the human heart gets easily exhausted of all capacity for self-giving love. But "the more room two hearts make for loving and following Jesus Christ the more room they also make for the deepest and most lasting love of each other." This was also Mr. Chacko's secret of real freedom from what may be called "exclusiveness" in friendship, that enemy of true love. He recognised, from very early in his life, that the desire to enjoy the company of one friend to the exclusion of others was the very opposite of real love and that it cut at the root of one's usefulness. The all-comprehending Friendship of Christ was to him the only effective remedy to this terrible cause of many of the tragedies of life. If you love your friend with the love that God has for him, then it will not be incompatible with your equally ardent love for others. By abandoning himself so wholeheartedly to the friendship of the Crucified and Risen Christ, Mr. Chacko got the capacity to love unreservedly. All those who came to him felt "wanted" in his presence and no one ever got bored with him. Thus the number of his intimate friends increased as the years went by. "You need not be afraid of giving all your friendships into the hands of God," he used to say, "God does not withhold anything that is good from his children. By giving up the few friends you have to God, you get back them and many others."

Loyalty was one of the keynotes of Mr. Chacko's character. If you trusted him with any need in your life you could be sure that he would never let you down; you could always count on his standing by you to the every end. In the matter of loyalty, as in many others, Mr. Chacko was a conservative in the best sense of the word. The coming in of new loyalties never disrupted his old loyalities. Everything was conserved with the utmost reverence. In a very real sense he made his own Christ's words: "He is my brother who does the will of my Father which is in Heaven." Everyone who longed to be Christ's was of his household; but Mr. Chacko never ignored his special obligations and responsibilities to his brothers and other blood relations. The burden-bearing solicitude and the tender care he manifested at all times when they needed him used to be an object-lesson to people who, in their enthusiasm for public service, often forgot their duties nearer home. The same spirit of loyalty marked his relation to the Church of which he was a member. In a true sense his Christianity was inter-denominational and catholic; but to him this was not incompatible with a deep loyalty to his own denomination, with all its failures and weaknesses. He suffered for what he considered to be wrong in his people or his Church; but he was too deep a Christian to disown them in any way. Self-righteous separation was not his way; the spirit that moved him was his Master's own spirit of redemption by identification.

Mr. Chacko always loved to think of himself as a "little child of God," completely confident of the Father's protection, at home in every part of the Father's world, fearless of every outward harm. One small incident that happened during his stay in the Madanapalle sanatorium worried him a great deal. As he lay in bed and watched the vegetables that were kept in one corner of the room,

he saw a snake moving about among the vegetables. There was no question of the snake. coming and hurting him and his conscious mind would not have admitted any fear. But before he had any time to think, an involuntary and spontaneous dread of the snake made him afraid. Others would have just thought of this fear as "natural" and dismissed it without further thought. But Mr. Chacko would not have any loose ends in his philosophy of existence. He saw that the involuntary fear could ultimately be traced to a lack of complete trust in God's protection. His whole being had not yet acclimatized itself in the atmosphere of unqualified and unreserved trust in the Father's love. Perfect love casts out fear. Years later, when he had retired from regular work in the College and settled down in a house nearby, a similar incident occurred which made him happy. He was preparing to go to bed one night. After reading for some time, as was his custom, under a table lamp kept very near the bed, he switched off the light without looking at it. The switch was a loose one and when he took off his hand the light came on again. Naturally he looked at the lamp and there, quite unexpectedly, he saw a snake coiled round the shade, obviously enjoying the warmth. A snake just above his head and he lying in bed – a rather unenviable situation! But somehow it did not make him afraid. Mr. Chacko was far too shy to relate such incidents to any but the most intimate friends; but he did feel happy and thankful to God that His love could drive away all fear even from our subconscious mind.

It was impossible to enjoy life more than Mr. Chacko enjoyed it. Christ's words, "I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly" were constantly on his lips. And he did experience the inner joy of the Universe which was the Father's Home. What a variety of things brought joy of life to this quiet-going soul! Whether it was growing tomatoes in his garden or discussing politics with friends or negotiating for cooperation between the various Churches, everything spoke to him of the love of God and he delighted in them all. He enjoyed the sight of a little baby in its mother's arms. He was keenly interested in watching its progress and, while rejoicing with the mother at the child's growth, he quietly called her attention to the need for remembering to transfer from her to the heavenly Father the little one's natural affection for her.

Truly indeed Mr. Chacko had discovered the secret of true happiness. To him the abundance of life consisted neither in having nor in not having but in being, in being a child of God enveloped by His love and confident of His interest and care. In true humbleness of spirit which puts its confidence in God, in sympathy with the world 's pain, in sorrow for the world's sin, in willingness to be utterly in the hands of God to be used for His purpose, in freedom from self-interest and self-assertion of any sort, Mr. Chacko possessed his soul. Heaven was in his heart and he brought heaven into the hearts of all those who came into contact with him.

It is indeed a good thing to have known such a man. No wonder men from far and wide came to meet him, men from all walks of life and of varied interests. Union Christian College was fortunate in having such a man for its moving spirit for the first twenty-six years of its existence.

From 1921, when the Union Christian College was started, till 1943, when he became 58 years of age, he was on its teaching staff. In 1943 he formally retired from the staff of the College, but he settled down in a small house nearby and continued to be the common friend of staff and students alike. Practically all his time was devoted to meeting students and others, individually and in groups.

Now that he was free from routine duties as a lecturer in Logic and Warden of a hostel, which used to occupy a great deal of his time, he once again began to pay greater and greater attention to the social problems of the poor and outcast in society. He conceived the idea of a fellowship business-house and a cooperative farm. He was not able to do much more than get some land for this purpose. The getting of this involved so many legal transactions and so much patient negotiation with people who were masters in the art of litigation that very few "religious" people would have dared to go anywhere near that business. But Mr. Chacko was not frightened of anything and he set about the task with determination and in the spirit of prayer. By extricating the land out of all the thousand legal complications and business dealings he showed that such things could be managed in the Christian way if only the parties were determined not to make compromises and willing to let God have His way in all aspects of their life.

In cooperation with a few other friends, Mr. Chacko started a small dairy on part of the land so acquired. The rest of the land was used for the raising of various seasonal crops like tapioca and paddy. In the cultivation of the land and in the management of the dairy farm he tested out the principle of Fellowship-working which he had applied in the running of the College and in his efforts to bring the Churches together. There were not a few who scoffed at the whole idea, but to those who moved intimately with him these experiments were a further proof of the rightness of Mr.

Chacko's convictions

In the midst of all these things, however, Mr. Chacko never forgot the great concern of his heart, to see the various denominations of the Christian Church in Kerala uniting to present the Gospel of Christ to non-Christian India. The conversations between the three Episcopal Churches of Kerala – the Orthodox Syrian Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, and the Church of South India – started more than a decade ago, chiefly on the initiative of Mr. Chacko and Mr. C.P. Mathew, had been remaining suspended for some years; and Mr. Chacko, with Mr. Mathew, once again took the initiative to revive them. In response to their request the Churches appointed official representatives to carry on the conversations. They met in conferences at Thiruvalla and Kottayam, drew up statements on faith and order, and began considering the possibility of a Federation of the three Churches mainly for evangelistic and other constructive activities.

Realizing that one great obstacle in the way of a Federation of the three Churches was the split in the Orthodox (Jacobite) Syrian Church, Mr. Chacko threw himself wholeheartedly into a strenuous and sustained effort for healing this breach. It was while he was engaged in these negotiations, and owing chiefly to the mental and physical strain that these involved, that he suddenly fell ill in Trivandrum on 11 September 1947. After a brief illness of four days, in the midst of his preoccupation with the Father's business, Mr. Chacko passed away at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, 15 September.

There was state-wide mourning at the unexpected departure of this great friend. Many people could not bring themselves to believe that Mr. Chacko had left them. His frail body had always been so much under the control of his indefatigable spirit that they had somehow taken it for granted that he would hold out for many more years. To many old students of the Union Christian College especially, Mr. Chacko's departure meant a heavy personal loss. He had been their friend, philosopher and guide. And in sorrow they recalled to themselves some of the vivid impressions of his life as Warden of the North East Hostel. The picture of his coming out of the Warden's room in the North East Hostel night after night with folded hands and a kindly smile on his benign face to take the roll-call, his solemn posture on the verandah outside the Warden's room on the first floor, where he stood motionless for at least an hour every morning and evening meditating on the love of God, the spotlessly clean clothes that he always wore, his brisk walk to the College with an evident concentration on the things he had in his mind, the kindly graciousness with which, lying on an easy chair, he offered a seat near him to any student who came to meet him, the genuine joy he felt in all their joys and the echoing laughter which tripped up the pious ones who expected him to be always solemn and long-faced, the patience and sympathy he showed in all things, great or small – these, and many, many other things about his life were fondly enumerated at the many meetings held in honour of him.

Mr. Chacko's character was a perfectly rounded one and it is difficult to pick out one feature as more important than others. But three things stand out so clearly that they cannot but be noticed: his utter singleness of purpose, his unfailing reliability and his absolute confidence in the sufficiency of Christ's love and resources in all circumstances. He has left behind an inspiring example and an exacting ideal for all those who have known him and will know about him hereafter.

If the word "success" has any meaning, Mr. Chacko's life was a great success. It was like a pebble dropped on the motionless waters of a vast inland sea. It sank to the bottom and soon disappeared into the unseen depths. But the ripples to which it gave rise expand on all sides in an unending succession of ever-widening circles and reach the farthest shores, gently shaking up everything on their way. Mr. Chacko lived in the most quiet manner possible and he has disappeared almost without notice; but the currents of true life that emanated from him shall go on even after he is forgotten.

Mr. Chacko belonged to the category of men to which St. Francis of Assissi belonged and the words applied to St. Francis by one of his admirers seem to be equally applicable to Mr. Chacko. Adapting those words to suit the present purpose we might say, "Do not tell us that Mr. K.C. Chacko has died. The spirit of change captured his body and buried it in a Church in Central Travancore; but it could not catch him. His spirit slipped through all the infirmities of his frail human body. And it emerged to be at the head of an invisible order, the order of those who can see his vision in its fullness. The memory of Mr. Chacko lives not in anything that he has written or in anything that might be written about him or even in any of the hundreds whom he taught how to live. He preached, not by words, but by his life, one of the most effective Christian sermons that have ever been preached, a sermon which will continue to work its gentle ferment and attain its designs, because if in reading it we learn to love him, we must find ourselves loving also his Master and his Model, the Lord Jesus Christ."

IN MEMORIAM: SRI. V.M. ITTYERAH

As we commemorate the life of the late Mr. V.M. Ittyerah, thoughts turn to the well-known verse in the Book of Proverbs, Chapter 10, Verse 7: "The memory of the righteous is a blessing." The Bible designates as 'righteous' persons who steadily endeavour to be right with God. In that sense, Mr. Ittyerah was truly a righteous man who, at the end of a long and fruitful life, has departed from among us and has gone on to the life after death for the new experiences that God has prepared for him.

The memory of the righteous is a blessing in two ways. We receive blessing by our thanking God for the many good things that our departed leader's life brought to us and to many others. We also receive blessing through our reflecting upon the things we can learn from his life and example so that our lives many also be further enriched and that we in turn may become a blessing to others.

We practice righteousness when we honestly seek to live as God wants us to live. This becomes possible when we accept life as a gift from God and train ourselves to be grateful for all that God permits to happen in our lives. Nothing makes a person more gracious and noble than the habit of being grateful. It is the ungrateful person who becomes hard and mean and repulsive. A basic sense of gratitude is the most effective antidote to pride and self-conceit. Gratitude to God was the basis of Mr Ittyerah's many-sided life of service.

One of the qualities that endeared Mr. Ittyerah to all who knew him was his utter freedom from any desire for self-glorification. It is a historical fact that so far as practical actions were concerned, no other individual did more than what Mr. Ittyerah did for the building up of the Union Christian College from its very small beginnings in 1921. And yet, it is also a historical fact that Mr. Ittyerah never claimed any credit for himself even in private. He was always urging everyone to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and to ask and receive the help needed to be well-pleasing to the Heavenly Father in all aspects of life. To be an instrument in the Saviour's hands for the fulfilment of God's purposes was the over-riding preoccupation of Mr. Ittyerah's life.

That preoccupation kept Mr. Ittyerah remarkably unselfconscious and free to take up any responsibility that came his way. The Principalship of the Union Christian College was not something that Mr. Ittyerah had ever aspired for. But at a critical juncture in the history of the College, others felt that Mr. Ittyerah would be the right person to lead the Fellowship in dealing with the crisis. And so, when invited by the Fellowship, he accepted the Principalship, as he would have accepted any other responsibility to which he felt called. To Mr. Ittyerah, the Principalship was nothing more and nothing less, either, than a responsibility to which God had called him, and he went about fulfilling that responsibility with the kind of conscientiousness he would bring to bear on any other task that was entrusted to him. He was not spectacular, and he did not seek to make an impression on others. He chaired the meetings of the College Fellowship as a leader who wanted to bring out the best from even the junior-most member. I believe that the College Fellowship (which in those days had the initiative in all policy matters) had its peak experience of Christian comradeship during Mr. Ittyerah's Principalship.

When the College decided to celebrate the Silver Jubilee during the academic year 1946-47, and to publish a Silver Jubilee Souvenir, some of us wanted a record, under Mr. Ittyerah's own signature, of the various Principles that the Founders of the College (including Mr. Ittyerah) had set before them as their guidelines. Here is a quotation from Mr. Ittyerah's article, setting forth the Principle of Fellowship work: "While helping individuals to discover and discard self-centred tendencies in their thinking and feeling, a Fellowship stimulates and sustains the faith which alone leads to fruitful and effective action. Where individuals are apt to be weak or wavering or self-centred or one-sided, a Fellowship so sustains and a disciplines them as to make possible a truer discernment of God's will and a deeper appropriation of the power to fulfil it."

Mr. Ittyerah was perhaps the most physically active person among the first four members of the College Fellowship, and there was no aspect of the life of the College in which his enthusiastic leadership was not conspicuous, as the old residents of College hill used to report to us of a later generation. In this context, it will be good to remember that the Fellowship method of work is not just another name for a democratic system of decision-making. The Fellowship process is very much more than democracy in action. It is based on a common openness to the inspiration, guidance, and enabling stimulus of the Holy Spirit, and it is sustained by mutual encouragement, mutual correction and mutual cooperation among the members. The Fellowship method will work where

members are really willing to take on responsibilities and to do things, but not where people enjoy being smart enough to find out where others go wrong or fail to perform, while at the same time being unwilling to take on responsibilities and to do things themselves. In the Fellowship method of work there is no place for mere observers and mere commentators, there is place only for active participants who are eager to do their best and to share responsibilities according to needs and abilities. A Fellowship is a testing ground for real humility and burden-bearing love.

One of the qualities that made Mr. Ittyerah a model for Fellowship behaviour was his genuine humility. For Mr. Ittyerah, humility of course did not mean self-depreciation or withdrawal from responsible activities. It meant freedom from obsession with one-self, coupled with respect for others. In him meekness was not weakness, but disciplined strength. One of my earliest memories of life in Union Christian College as a student in the nineteen thirties is that of Mr. Ittyerah standing with the students, watching an intercollegiate football match, and insisting on the students cheering not only our own team but also the visiting team from some other college. He taught students to develop true sportsmanship through respect for opponents and moderation in the celebration of one's own victory.

There were several outstanding personalities among the teaching staff of the Union Christian College in those days, men who were among the greatest in the country, especially in their own chosen fields of teaching. The students respected all of them as men and as teachers. However, I believe it will not be an exaggeration to say that there was no one who was loved more than Mr. Ittyerah by the students or by the people living around College hill. He was a friend to all.

Mr. Ittyerah married at a later age than is the usual custom in the Syrian Christian community. But when he did marry, he brought into the College community an equally friendly person as his partner in life. They were blessed with two children - a son and a daughter - and very soon their home became a meeting place for most of the children in the College community. Mr. Ittyerah loved children and children responded to him spontaneously. It was only a few months before his death that my own four-year-old grand-daughter was taken to see Mr. Ittyerah. She was seeing him for the first time in her life. As a family we shall never forget the way in which this four year old child went and sat in Mr. Ittyerah's lap, spontaneously gave him a kiss, and exclaimed, "I like this Appachen!" In the presence of children the child-like simplicity of Mr. Ittyerah became most evident.

Jesus said: "Unless you turn and become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Even at the ripe old age of 89, Mr. Ittyerah was very much a true child of God, and we may be sure that he will be in heaven with all those other children who seek to be well pleasing in the sight of their heavenly Father.

"Blessed is the memory of the righteous."

(Sermon preached at the memorial service)

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THE CHURCHES AND COUNSELLING

What do we expect from our clergymen? Preaching of learned sermons? Aesthetic ordering of worship? Efficient chairing of committee meetings? Raising money for the activities of the Church? Expert management of Church affairs in general? These capabilities are all to be welcomed and admired in a minister. But are these all we want? Or even the most important? How about caring for persons in the congregation and the neighbourhood? How about the capacity to facilitate and foster loving and mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships? Are our pastors adequately trained for this basic vocation of every minister of Christ?

Jesus is our pastor par excellence. What impression do we get from the gospels about his basic preoccupation? Think of Jesus, hungry and thirsty, waiting for a late lunch near a well, spontaneously entering into a pastoral dialogue with the Samaritan woman. Think of Jesus, trudging along the road, jostled by crowds, noticing Zacchaeus on the tree and personally inviting him to come down in order that he might visit his home and get to know him. Think of Jesus, rescuing from her detractors the woman caught in the act of adultery and condemned 'by the law' to be stoned to death. Jesus caring for persons all the time, almost to the exclusion of all formal "Programmes of Church Work," has to be our basic model for pastors.

Most of the time our clergymen have to play a role at a service of worship, at a wedding, at a funeral, etc. Very often they have to provide the "authority figure" in order to get things done. But should the cassock or the clerical collar be allowed to reduce these human beings into mere play-actors? Is it not necessary that, for the sake of their congregations, they should be helped to be real persons capable of helping others in interpersonal relationships?

A school teacher comes along and shares his worry. Somehow he had rubbed some of his students the wrong way. Their cause was taken up by a whole class. And teacher-student relationships have become highly irritating and nerve-racking. "Sir Pastor, what can I do to get out of this muddle?" Will it be enough if he piously asks the teacher to read the Bible and pray?

The personnel officer of a factory is torn between the need to assist the management to keep production improving and the need somehow to satisfy the workers in their constantly increasing demands for better and ever better wages and labour conditions. He knows that if only both parties would sit down and reason together their conflict could be solved. But that is the basic problem; they refuse to reason together and go on calling each other names and threatening 'further action.' How can interpersonal relationships be facilitated in this situation? Can the local pastor help? Has he had any training for that?

Sam has been rising rapidly as an Executive Officer in a reputed firm. His wife, Meena, is a very smart and popular socialite. But at home they constantly get on each other's nerves. Increasing bed-room quarrels have brought Sam and Meena to such a stage that divorce seems to be the only way out. What has been a secret agony for the still young couple has begun to spill over. Their parents and intimate friends are deeply concerned and persuade them to see a counsellor. By simply facilitating their talking to each other without anger, the counsellor helps them to see that neither Sam's domineering nor Meena's frigidity need be accepted as inevitable. They see that there is a positive way out of their mutual frustration. Sam and Meena were lucky because they had a trained counsellor to go to for help. Are our pastors trained to be facilitators of such interpersonal relationships?

It is generally accepted that in order to give effective service in various aspects of life people need training. The engineer, the doctor, the tailor, the barber, all have had to undergo systematic training to do their job well. But it is often forgotten that men and women need training to enable them to be truly human, to develop creative relationships with other people and, most of all, to be facilitators of interpersonal relations among others. Even listening to others with real attention needs training. And no one can understand another sufficiently without learning to listen not only to the words but also to the feelings of the other.

The Confessional used to be a valuable institutional means for pastors to help members of their congregations in their mental worries and moral perplexities. But how far is this institution being used as fully as it could be? How well are our Pastors trained to help individuals and groups in their frustrations and conflicts?

There is an ever-widening field of psychological knowledge that can help relieve strains in the lives of individuals and groups and foster the development of mutually caring and sharing communities. Is the Christian Church in India making full use of the new skills in the field for the practising of love in everyday life? Training in counselling is now a 'must' for all pastors.

St. Paul said: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor.9:22)

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)

MARRIAGE IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

I Meaning of marriage

Every marriage has two aspects: it is a convenanted relationship between a man and a woman; it is at the same time also an institution that links the couple to society. In its aspect as relationship, marriage is intended to fulfil the need of every person 1) to love and to be loved and valued, 2) to have satisfying sexual expression, and 3) to experience partnership in creative activity, including responsible parenthood. In its aspect as an institution, marriage is meant to enable the couple (i) to enjoy the benefits of living in community, and (ii) to participate responsibly in the concerns of society.

In both these aspects, marriage is entered into at a point of time, but it also involves a process of growth and a continuing adjustment to change. Very often the mental image that a person has of the partner is very different from the reality of the partner, and the change from the illusion to an awareness and acceptance of the reality may involve pain. It is also a fact to be reckoned with that neither partner remains the same as when they first met. Change may be for the better or for the worse, but change is a fact of life. Success in marriage depends on the willingness and ability to accept and to adjust to the change. There can be adventure in continually learning new things and changing creatively. Creative change can occur through conflict as well as through happy evolution. The pain in conflict can be transformed into an experience of growth. But it needs willingness to learn and grow. Those who are confused about their own identity and are unable to relate intimately to anyone are likely to find this process a hard experience. Marriage is a commitment to participation in a creative process, and it demands willingness to be re-created.

II What makes a marriage Christian?

To the Christian, marriage is a covenanted relationship ordained by God for the well-being of the human race. In Christian marriage the couple is expected to have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord in their lives. As such they are to have his Lordship in their home and family life also. It is solemnised in the presence of God and His people where the couple convenant with each other to live together for life by loving, honouring and cherishing one another. In the Christian marriage unity of soul, mind and body are sought, where sexual unity becomes the physical culmination of spiritual and mental unity, resulting in complete satisfaction with one another. This unity is a process of growth by: forgiving one another, upholding one another, sacrificing oneself for the other, praying together and sharing together. It is bound together by Divine Love as revealed in Christ Jesus. Suffering in the form of trials, tribulations and tragedies of life, when accepted voluntarily, enable the Christian couple to get a deeper understanding of life and, helped by the grace and power of God, they triumph over all troubles and grow in deeper and closer intimacy with God and one another. It also results in deeper faith in God and deeper appreciation of one another, strengthening their growth in oneness. Also, it gives them the will and wisdom to plan together all aspects of their life, including the bringing up of their children.

III Deciding on a partner

Sooner or later a person and/or his family has to take the decision as to who he or she is to marry. There will certainly be a number of considerations which will influence and ultimately determine the final choice. Among the major considerations are those related to personal security (Will he be able to support me? Does he have a good job? Will she be able to work and supplement my income? etc.). There are also the social considerations (Does he/she belong to my caste, religion, linguistic group, etc.? Will he/she make a good impression in public? What are his/her parents? How are they looked upon by the community? Is he/she well educated? Will I have to live alone or with the in-laws?). There are also very personal questions and considerations (height, looks, size, complexion, etc.). All of these are very important indeed and each person will certainly ask those of these which he/she considers vital in their respective situations. However, in seeking answers, one must develop a proper perspective and the answers must be evaluated in a certain context. There are many pressures, both from within and outside, which tend to push us towards a certain decision, but one must guard against hasty decisions.

Whoever influences or directs the decision, it is important that the specific persons entering into the relationship have adequate opportunity to think through the implications of their choice. For example, a person who has the opportunity to mix freely with persons of the opposite sex should carefully distinguish between feelings of infatuation and love. This is not always easy to do but one must keep in mind the possibility that a certain relationship is not really based on love. For older people responsible for helping younger people make or take the decision, there is need to remind themselves of the rapidly changing social situations and the growing and varying new demands that press upon young people today.

Towards this end, the Church and other agencies must provide, first of all, information on vital areas of personal life - e.g. nature of sex, functioning of sex organs, their role in reproduction and in gratification of other needs. Secondly, increasing opportunities must be provided for mixed groups to meet together and work together by themselves without chaperoning of the detective, suspicious and supervisory type. Young people need and deserve to be trusted. Thirdly, specific problems as they crop up have to be faced honestly and opportunities provided for their solution. Premarital guidance and counselling can go a long way in helping young people to make their choice in the proper perspective. A final word on making the choice. At every stage, from childhood onwards, encouragement must be given to make decisions in an adult way, on the basis of facts and not of fantasies. For example, if a person has never had the freedom even to choose what clothes he is going to wear, how can we now suddenly expect maturity in choosing a wife/husband?

The world of adults must be patient and understanding. The world of youth needs to examine more than the romantic ideals portrayed on the cinema screen and in the printed novel. It is only through mutual trust of all the parties involved in the decision that a truly mature decision will result. In the choice of a marriage partner, therefore, more of the essentials of the relationship need to be considered than the superficialities which so often dominate.

IV Fostering happiness in marriage

Everyone wishes the newly married couple happiness, as though happiness is some gift that can be given away. Every couple who enters marriage is mainly concerned with getting happiness. Happiness does not happen, nor can anyone demand a certain amount of happiness. It is the result of a relationship based on understanding and love and will grow more or less in proportion to our concern for the one we decide to live with.

The new life which a young couple enters on can be compared to a blank sheet of paper which, as a couple, they will fill in from day to day with thoughts and actions, sorrows and joys. Whether the result will be beautiful and harmonious or blotted over depends on each partner.

There are certain things which people get in marriage but no one can get any of it without first giving. One gives companionship, time, work, honour, tenderness, sympathy; it is a joyous giving which cannot be compared to any other form of giving that is experienced in life. How much do you give? Here again there is no known measure but this we do know: that every human being wants to be valued and respected as a person. You know that recognition and appreciation of your smallest efforts make you happy; therefore it follows, if you reverse this process, and seek opportunities to appreciate what is being done by your spouse, you will bring happiness.

Love is the word most frequently used in connection with the man-woman relationship in marriage. But love is so general a term that, in order to make it real, love needs to be practised in various specific directions. Love can easily degenerate into possessiveness if it is not practised in terms of respect for the personality of the beloved, in terms of conscious willingness to let the partner be what he/she decides to be. Respect for each other is essential in the growth of love.

Closely related to this is the need to see that partners avoid humiliating each other. Humiliation inflicted on each other by partners, whether consciously or unconsciously, is the cause of much unhappiness in marriage. Lack of adequate recognition of the partner's worth as a person, failure to appreciate the strengths and achievements of the partner or to give overt expression to such appreciation even when it exists, comparison of the partner with oneself or with others to the partner's disadvantage, ignoring the special needs of the partner owing to either lack of sensitivity or indifference, cynical or sarcastic remarks especially in connection with the sexual needs of the partner and other similar provocations can cause humiliation to the partner. Especially when the humiliated partner cannot or does not express in public the feeling of humiliation, it tends to build up inner resentment and saps the flow of warmth and spontaneity in the relationship. Often a vicious circle is started and thereafter real or imaginary indignities are felt more and more resentfully and bitterness grows. Many cases of marital infidelity can be traced to the secret, and often unconscious, need of the partner to vindicate himself/herself.

Sexual intercourse is a physical expression of the "oneness" which couples seek and find in marriage. It is a wonderful experience and should not be feared nor looked upon as a necessary evil. The marriage act makes us go beyond words to express our love; it is a total giving of oneself to the other. As an offshoot of this love a woman bears a child. The child is not only a symbol of their love but an acknowledgment of the responsibility they have to life.

Though the woman bears the children, the bringing up of children is a shared responsibility. No longer can we

clearly demarcate the functions of the father and mother. Today a large number of women work outside the home in order to enable the family to have a better living standard. This new dimension of working-wife and mother can bring tensions into married life. Greater demands will be made on the husband; he will not only be required to share in the tasks of the home but should be prepared to accept a little less attention than he anticipated.

V Some special problems

1. Inter-faith marriage: Inter-faith marriages are inevitable in the fast-changing pattern of our society. More and more such marriages are taking place in cities, towns and industrial townships where young boys and girls of different castes, faiths, and strata of society mingle freely in offices, factories, college campuses, cinema halls and other public places. The race in materialism leads to the subjugation of the poor and magnifies the problem of economic insecurity, especially for women.

There can be many reasons for inter-communal or inter-faith marriages, such as national unity based on secularism, which pushes religion into a secondary place. The Indian Government is promoting inter-caste and inter-communal marriages. To escape the rigidity of social norms, the young enter into matrimonial alliance regardless of their faith, caste or community. Lack of knowledge may account for such decisions.

Of course, each stratum of society will see it from a different perspective. In rural areas community pressure helps to hold the family together. In higher strata of society, status of families plays a great role. In every case the question of inter-communal marriage should be reconsidered and re-evaluated.

What should we do as Christians? Should we uphold the stability of society at the cost of individual happiness and fulfilment?

The Church, the community and the family of such persons are not only to accept such marriages, but have a responsibility towards such individuals. They need our love and understanding and, above all, they require opportunities where they can continue to have the experience of being "in Christ" and thus be able to sustain each other in love. This situation should alert the parents to seriously take up the responsibility of imparting Christian education to their children from childhood.

In this fast-changing society we cannot be static and also grow. Change has to be brought about in our thinking and outlook on such problems so that each individual has the freedom and opportunity to grow. This freedom must be controlled by Christian love based on true concern for each other.

2. Status of women: In many homes, including Christian homes, girls do not have the same status as boys. As girls they are given less respect than their brothers, who often get better food, clothing and educational opportunities, There are, of course, exceptions but they only highlight the prevailing discrimination against women.

When a girl reaches marriageable age, she has little chance of choosing her life-partner. In many cases she hardly looks at the man before the marriage ceremony.

Many girls remain unmarried because of the evils of the dowry system. Some girls whose parents give a dowry, but not enough, get harassed by the husband and the in-laws throughout their lives.

Pre-marital sex and extra-marital sex are taboo but when men indulge in them they can get away with it whereas women have to suffer the consequences.

Similarly, women are normally at a great disadvantage in the matter of financial resources. Very often even a woman who earns an income has to obtain the approval of the husband or other elder members of the family to use even part of the money for her own individual needs. Economic security and freedom to make decisions regarding the use of at least part of the couple's income are necessary for a woman to feel happy.

3. Unwed mothers: These are the socially boycotted people who are condemned by society for a deed for which they alone cannot be held responsible. A woman in this situation, having been rejected by her own family, by the man whom she trusted and by society in general, needs a great deal of love, understanding and guidance. Having been stripped of every vestige of decency by the man she loved and trusted, she feels an outcast. What can be done to rebuild her self-confidence? How can we help to make her feel accepted in society? The responsibility of the community and women's groups should be directed towards helping her to build up her future rather than harping on her past deeds.

There are rehabilitation homes run by Christian organisations to cater to the needs of these women and their children, but this is not enough. What we should ask ourselves is how can we assist in bringing about a change

in our attitudes? Society has an important role to play in accepting these women and giving them an opportunity to live truly human lives.

Sexual relations outside marriage: As long as life is simple and as long as the partners live in one place, there is little chance of illegitimate sexual relations with other persons. But when the woman also starts working and is away from home, questions begin to arise. Things get complicated, especially if both the partners live away from each other and work in different spheres.

A basic need for friendship is misunderstood both by the other partner and society. The complexities of modern life throw people together whether married or not. For example, working in a big office, railways, etc., a person finds himself or herself in the company of others during the whole day. There is a chance for attraction and deep attachments. And these may lead to physical intimacies.

But the question is whether married partners should allow themselves to be involved in sexual relations with anyone other than their own married partners. There is sexuality in all enjoyment of other people's company, but will it be right for a married person to be involved in the ultimate expression of sexuality through sexual intercourse with anyone other than one's own partner? The Church's answer at present is definitely "no" to this question.

There is also the question of pre-marital sexual relations. In Asian society as a rule, it looks as if young men and women are expected to be ascetics with no experience of sex until the day of their marriage and then to be mature partners in everything, including their sexual relations with each other. This often causes a great deal of emotional upheaval with attending consequences. Is it time that Asian society began having a new look at possibilities of men and women learning by experience to prepare themselves for the life of partnership they are supposed to begin at marriage?

5. Divorce: Divorce is the ultimate stage when two people, who had come together with the thought that they cherish each other and hope together to achieve something that is very precious and important for them at that time, find all of a sudden or gradually that it is not so and find it difficult to adjust themselves to each other's company and thus want to be separated legally so as to be free.

The marriage, whether solemnised in church or not, is the union of one man with one woman voluntarily entered into for life to the exclusion of all others. Recognition and acceptance of the growth of one's personality and love and mutual understanding set a couple free to grow into a true personal relationship of marriage and deliver them from being at the mercy of their moods and difficulties.

What then leads to divorce? It is two different personalities clashing with each other and hurting each other's pride and respect. Once the confidence in each other is lost, then many other factors play their role to separate the couple from each other physically, mentally and spiritually.

The couple should be really aware of what it is that they are seeking in marriage. In this connection much can be done in the pre-marital stage when the real facts of life are explained to the couple. They should be made aware that it is not always a bed of roses that will be laid on their way but along with that the thorns are also there. Counselling has a very important role to play in communicating the values of marriage.

All along, as far as possible, permanency of marriage should be emphasised more than divorce.

The fact may be taken into consideration that at that particular time divorce might look as if it was the only solution but the ultimate adverse effects on the minds, bodies and souls of each partner, and the children, if any, should be looked into.

So, before taking this very serious step, all other avenues of reconciliation should be tried as far as possible. Divorce really means the failure of the couple to adjust to each other's needs, both physically and mentally.

The divorced people may be really very mentally hurt and isolated. In that case, families, women's groups and the Church as a whole have to play a very important role to make them understand their situation and give them welcome in their midst, so that they regain their self-confidence and position in the community.

IV Responsible parenthood and family planning

Parenthood is a vocation and becomes more meaningful when consciously chosen. The idea that, because children are the gift of God, all that husbands and wives can, or need to, do is to let them happen is not consistent with Christian responsibility. Unwanted pregnancies ought not to happen and can be prevented. How good it will be for the child and for the parents if each child is the result of the parents wanting and deciding to have it. It is possible for parents to decide to have only

the number of children they can properly feed and clothe and educate and provide for. All Churches are agreed that there should be wise planning for the number of children in each family. The existing differences are only on the particular methods to be used to prevent unwanted pregnancies. It is each couple's responsibility and prerogative to adopt the methods that are satisfying to them. There are sources of information and practical help available in most countries. The point here is that this is an area of concern which every couple should take seriously as part of their vocation as parents.

VII When things go wrong or spouses get stuck

To be prepared for the worst is very often the condition for confidence. When partners in marriage feel that the sense of adventure has gone out of their relationship or when things have gone wrong, it is necessary that there should be some third person to whom either of the partners or both together can turn for help in their predieament. This, of course, presupposes acceptance by both partners that seeking help from a third person will not be reckoned as disloyalty to each other Society has to be educated to recognise the importance of providing counselling services to married couples as well as to persons intending to get married. The need is for counsellors who will help persons to become aware of destructive forces in themselves and in their relationships and who will foster responsible autonomy in their counsellees by encouraging the creative possibilities in themselves and their relationships. Paternalistic prescribing of what the counsellee should do makes the counsellee more dependent on external props and less capable of coping with his/her own situation. The Church needs to reorient theological education and pastoral training in order that pastors may become counsellors also. But even pastors trained to be counsellors will need associate counsellors because of the time and number of people involved. Will each Church take this matter seriously and give information to its members where therapeutic counselling can be had?

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PROBLEMS IN MARRIED LIFE AND THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING - (I)

Parents often say: "We must get our son/daughter settled before long." They are, of course, thinking of arranging a marriage for their son/daughter. However, it is rather important that we give some thought to the question of whether marriage is a "settling down." Romantic literature speaks of young men and women who "got married and lived happily ever after." But is that what really happens in the lives of people whom we have known?

We live in a world that is constantly changing. We are surrounded by people and circumstances that are constantly undergoing transformation in one way or another. Change may be for the better or for the worse. When the old marriage service spoke of man and wife committing themselves to each other "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health" it was most probably the external circumstances and conditions of life that were being referred to. These, of course, are important matters to be taken into account.

However, in this article, I would like to draw attention to problems that arise not from external circumstances but from within the personalities of husband and wife. Even in the natural course of things, many internal personality changes happen in the life of individuals, bringing about consequent changes in their behaviours. Very often we come across instances of the surfacing in men and women of the prejudices, hostilities, aggression, selfishness and a host of other destructive forces that were dormant and unnoticed when they came together as husband and wife and contracted to live together "until death do us part." Thus we see that, quite apart from changes in their circumstances and unanticipated environmental pressures which couples have to face very often, there are many sources of conflict thrown up from within the persons themselves, owing to inevitable differences in the pace and variety of changes that occur in their own personalities and attitudes.

It is very important to reckon with the fact that all changes that occur within persons are not always growth-oriented or creative. It is not at all uncommon to find certain persons who seemed to be governed by very lofty ideas at the time of marriage, undergo a process of regression to more primitive and less idealistic postures as they continue to rub together in the course of everyday life. When a person is "in love" or under the excitement of entering into the marriage covenant, which in fantasy seems to be the gateway to romance, the person is honestly unaware of prejudices or life-negating attitudes imbibed quite unconsciously in childhood from father, mother or other parent-figures. These destructive forces have remained dormant in the unconscious areas of their personality, and life has gone on merrily for them until unforeseen challenges have to be faced. As their personalities begin to rub against the personalities of their spouses, they begin to regress and manifest more and more those life-negating attitudes that had so far been well-hidden even from themselves. The husband and wife gradually begin to function at different wavelengths and become conscious of "the incompatibility of their temperaments!"

Eight areas in their life together, in which there are infinite possibilities for the joy of creative comradeship, may instead turn into areas of conflicts: 1. The area of sexual intimacy, 2. The are a of management of money and other possessions, 3. The area of relationship with other people, especially the 'in-laws,' 4. The area of bringing up children, 5. The area of intellectual and aesthetic pursuits, including religious practices, 6. The area of caring for each other's needs, including food, health and recreation, 7. The area of traditional role expectations and self-fulfilling employment or pursuits, and 8. The area of the individual's self-respect and zest in life.

Growth as happy partners in life does not always just happen. Very often there is need for conscious effort and learning. Wise couples quickly seek the help of someone who is known to be able to help. How about you and your spouse?

* * * * *

PROBLEMS IN MARRIED LIFE AND THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING - (II)

When problems arise in married life, and husband and wife become conscious of conflict in ideas, desires or ways of doing things there is no need to feel guilty or to try to pretend that there is no problem. Ignoring conflicts is a very harmful way of dealing with them. Conflicts are signals of the need for some new learning and some further growth in the relationship. That is where a properly trained Counsellor can help.

The expression 'properly trained Counsellor' is used here with a specific purpose. The words counsellor and counselling often mean quite different things to different people. For example, some of our well-known evangelical preachers have a team of assistants whom they call counsellors, whose work is to follow up the message of the preacher with further personal explanations and interpretations so as to help the listeners to understand the message more fully and to commit themselves further in the new life they have received. This work is, of course, very valuable and often very necessary. However, the psychological counselling to which couples with problems are invited in this article is something quite different.

Psychological counselling, or what is otherwise called psychotherapy, is not a process of telling people what they should do, but a process of encouraging people to understand themselves, to discover effective ways of dealing with their own problems, and to make specific decisions leading to concrete action, growth and inner satisfaction. The counsellor in this context is more a listener than a speaker - one who stands by the counsellee and stimulates the counsellee's own ability to cope with difficulties, rather than one who manages things for the counsellee, including decision-making.

The basic assumption in psychological or therapeutic counselling is that every person has latent potentialities to deal creatively with every situation that he/she has to face and that there never is any need to give up in despair or to consider oneself as being totally at the mercy of other people or circumstances. A counsellor whose own life is based on firm faith in God would be conscious of the religious foundation of the above basic assumption. This would give an indication about the additional resources that a properly trained Pastoral Counsellor can bring to counselling. However, here also it is a crucial question whether the "Pastor" has had proper training in the art of counselling, because untrained persons, even if they appear in clerical garments, often impose their own opinions on the counsellee and thus detract from the counsellee's growth as a person. Pontification can never be a substitute for real counselling!

The first step in counselling is the establishment of a relationship of mutual respect between the counsellor and the counsellee. The counsellor's caring attention should be such as to help the counsellee feel more and more encouraged to share his/her thoughts and feelings without fear of being judged or blamed. As the counsellee feels more and more confidence in the counsellor, the sharing will become deeper and fuller. It may be necessary for feelings of anger or hurt or vengeance to be given free expression so that the counsellee may experience real catharsis, which will enable the thinking to be freer and clearer.

A couple struggling with a conflict may come out blaming each other, either directly or by insinuation. It is important that the counsellor should not take sides, but should encourage them to do their best to explain their own thoughts and feelings without let or hindrance. They should be free even to use what others might consider 'foul language;' the only necessary restriction is that there should be no physical violence or destruction of property. Experience has unmistakably demonstrated that free expression of thoughts and feelings, if properly coordinated by the alert counsellor, will lead the persons to a better and better understanding of themselves and of each other, to a clearer perception of the choices before them and to more and more appropriate decision-making for their life thereafter.

One thing to be remembered always is that no one's problem is exactly the same as someone else's and that there is no general formula which will solve all problems. In practice, the most important guideline is that every effort should be made to keep the couple motivated by a steady goodwill towards each other and to help each person to work out answers to personal questions like "What do I learn from this experience?" A good counsellor steadily holds up the counsellees to persist in their effort and acts as a catalyst promoting creative interaction between them in their conflict until they come to a stage of joyful confidence that they can manage by themselves. Promotion of responsible autonomy in the counsellees is the aim of all counselling.

GUIDELINES FOR THERAPEUTIC COUNSELLING

Basic Understanding:

Counselling is primarily not a matter of technique but a way of relating to another person. What is envisaged is a caring, supportive relationship in which the counsellee is helped to become increasingly aware of and to understand, his/her own feelings and thoughts, and to take charge of his/her own life and relationships in a responsible way. The goal is responsible autonomy. The process is an experience of interpersonal learning or re-learning through attentive listening and free sharing of feelings and thoughts.

Two aspects of counselling are: i) helping the counsellee's self-exploration and self-understanding, and ii) promoting resolution of problems and decisions for a growth-oriented course of action.

The process of counselling includes:-

i) Establishing 'caring contact' and rapport
ii) Listening, observing and understanding (facial and bodily reactions give important clues to inner feelings)
iii) Reflecting back to see whether the words used did convey the meaning intended, to test whether what the counsellor understood was what the counsellee wanted to share.
iv) Confronting – pointing out to the counsellee any discrepancies, evasion, theorizing, vagueness, etc., and asking for appropriate response.
v) Contract about goals.
vi) Sorting out options and working out courses of practical action - always remembering that only the counsellee's own decisions will make him/her able to carry on (avoid advice-giving)
vii) Possible continuation in group work for continued growth.

Constructive factors in the counselling relationship:

Note:- Carkhuff, who has done a great deal of research into these, has named them 'Dimensions in the Interpersonal Process,' and has worked out a scheme of measuring the effectiveness of the counselling relationship by ranking them on a scale of 1 to 5, as indicated below.

Dimension 1: EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING

Empathy is 'feeling into' or 'trial identification,' in imagination putting oneself in the counsellee's place in order to understand what it feels like being in his/her situation: keeping one's own feelings in abeyance and understanding the counsellee's feelings as though from within him/her. This is different from sympathy. Sympathy is feeling as the counsellee feels. In sympathy one is occupied with one's own feelings. Empathy is understanding what the counsellee feels, perceiving what the counsellee is experiencing in a way as to be able to communicate that perception. In any particular interaction, there can be a very high level of empathic understanding in which case it is rated 5, or there may be only a very low level of empathic understanding - in which case it is rated 1. The counsellor learns to discriminate between the various levels of empathic understanding, and to rate the level at any particular moment on a scale of 1,2,3,4,5.

Dimension II: COMMUNICATING RESPECT

Respect is both for self and for the counsellee. The counsellor has to be free from self-depreciation, and has to accept the dignity and worth of the counsellee. Keeping out any tendency to judge, or approve, or manipulate, or manage the counsellee, the counsellor communicates to the counsellee a positive regard, a recognition that the counsellee has inherent free will and the capacity to choose and decide what he/she will do to cope with situations, and to be self -directed rather than directed by others. In any particular interaction, if the counsellor tends to be condescending or over-protecting or falsely reassuring or discounting or to advise and make decisions for the counsellee, it will be a very low level of communicating respect - in which case it is rated 1. A high level of communicating respect will be rated 5 - with various degrees of respect rated in between 1 and 5.

Dimension III: GENUINENESS

Genuineness implies the counsellor being freely and deeply himself/herself - without pretence, without role-playing, without any self-defensiveness. It is being congruent without discrepancy between what is being really experienced inside and what is said or otherwise expressed outwardly. At low levels of genuineness, the counsellor may be saying one thing while unconsciously communicating something different; he/she may be stiffly 'professional,' playing a role, saying what he/she is 'expected to say' rather than what is really felt. The different levels of genuineness are to be rated on the scale

1 to 5. 5 being the rank for the greatest degree of genuineness.

Dimension IV: CONCRETENESS

Concreteness implies the clear expression of feelings and thoughts in actual experience - not vague generalizations or theorizations, but dealing with specific experiences. The counsellor who cares for concreteness encourages the counsellee to speak of the 'what, when, where, how and why' of whatever he/she is trying to communicate and insists on the counsellee being specific, helping the counsellee to move from generalizations like 'everybody, they, we, all people,' etc., to 'he, she, I, me,' etc., and to deal with particular instances, with all the feelings and reactions involved. Avoiding what is irrelevant, moving from abstract notions to concrete experiences, the counsellee is helped to pinpoint specific issues and deal with them. In any interaction, concreteness may be very low and then it is rated 1 - whereas the fullest concreteness is rated 5, with other intermediate levels rated in between.

Dimension V: IMMEDIACY

This involves dealing with actual feelings and experiences of the 'here and now' – the immediate and present realities of the situation experienced during the time of interaction between the counsellor and the counsellee. The flow of feelings between the counsellor and the counsellee within the counselling situation is honestly recognized and freely discussed. By learning to express all the positive and negative feelings towards the counsellor, the counsellee learns to restructure his interpersonal relationships. Immediacy involves the counsellor feeling comfortable to explore the flow of feelings between himself/herself and the counsellee, as one of the ways in which the counsellee learns about his/her relations with others. Immediacy requires that the past is dealt with only for its relevance for the actual present - because the present is the only time when the counsellee can change. Rate the level of immediacy from very low to very high on the scale 1 to 5.

Dimension VI : FACILITATIVE SELF-DISCLOSURE

Self-disclosure is the revealing of personal feelings, attitudes, opinions, and experiences on the part of the counsellor for the benefit of the counsellee. In facilitative self-disclosure, the counsellor shares with the counsellee personal experiences that are pertinent and meaningful to the issues that the counsellee is involved in. At low levels, the counsellor may be yielding to the temptation to 'dump' on the counsellee experiences and reminiscences that do not help the counsellee, or the counsellor may maintain a screen of strict neutrality and non-involvement which inhibits the counsellee's freedom to reveal himself/herself. The need of the counsellee is the focus in facilitative self-disclosure. The lowest level is rated 1, and the highest level self-disclosure that is relevant and facilitative is rated 5.

Dimension VII : CONFRONTATION

Confrontation is not passing any judgement, but clearly drawing the attention of the counsellee to any perceived discrepancy between what the counsellee is saying and what he/she seems to be experiencing, or between what was said before and what is being said now or what his/her actions imply. Confrontation also involves pointing out irrelevancies, vagueness and evasions in order that the counsellee may be helped to be straight and clear and responsible. Confrontation is a 'two-edged sword' and can, if unwisely indulged in, hinder the counselling process; but confrontation is also a very important aspect of the counsellor being genuine and honest. It is to be used with discretion and a sense of timing and appropriateness. The lowest level is indicated by the rank of 1 and the most effective level is rated 5, with different levels in between.

Note:- Accurate rating of counsellor-functioning in the above seven dimensions of the counsellor-counsellee interaction is a good way of assessing the development of the counsellor's professional competence, and will be a valuable aspect of any training in counselling skills. The minimum required in any of the above dimensions is 3. Counsellor-functioning below level 3 may only hinder the counsellee's growth.

EVALUATION FORM

Dimensions		Ratings				
I	Empathic Understanding	1	2	3	4	5
II	Communicating Respect	1	2	3	4	5
III	Genuineness	1	2	3	4	5
IV	Concreteness	1	2	3	4	5
V	Immediacy	1	2	3	4	5
VI	Facilitative Self-disclosure	1	2	3	4	5
VII	Confrontation	1	2	3	4	5

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism
He learns to condemn;

If a child lives with hostility
He learns to fight;

If a child lives with ridicule
He learns to be shy;

If a child lives with shame
He learns to feel guilty;

If a child lives with tolerance
He learns to be patient;

If a child lives with encouragement
He learns confidence;

If a child lives with praise
He learns to appreciate;

If a child lives with fairness
He learns justice;

If a child lives with security
He learns to have faith;

If a child lives with approval
He learns to like himself;

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship
He learns to find love in the world.

(K.C.J. used this very often in counselling workshops)

* * * * *

I want so much for us and our

Marriage

I want a marriage based on love and caring. I didn't marry you to escape loneliness or any unhappy situation, to gain status or to solve problems. I married you because I care about you as much as I care about myself; I want as much for you as I want for myself. I want our love and caring to grow and become enriched over the years.

In order to nurture our love:

Let's always try to cooperate. With give and take, we can avoid resentment and anger. If we work together to overcome obstacles – by cooperating toward a mutual goal – the end result will be satisfactory and gratifying.

Let's have a true partnership. We are equal in respect to our basic needs, our desire to belong, to be accepted and to be loved. Our partnership will succeed if we can maintain this equality.

Let's develop confidence in ourselves, individually and in each other. We have no room for hatred, envy, jealousy, selfishness or conceit in our marriage - we only have room for leniency, good-heartedness, generosity and tolerance.

Let's be best friends. We'll have good times to share – times to tell secrets, to laugh and to shout. We'll undoubtedly have sad times, too - times to cry, to mourn, to be quiet. Our marriage will be elastic enough to allow for the changes together and the changes each of us will make as individuals.

Let's use sex as an expression of our love..... caring, sharing, touching, loving. Although sex is important, it cannot sustain a faltering marriage nor be the sole basis for a new marriage. Our relationship will be mirrored in our sexual fulfilment, so let's work on our total relationship to experience real fulfilment.

Let's work constantly on communication. If I make you angry, tell me. Do not suffer in silence. When we have differences of opinion, we will listen to each other and try to understand.

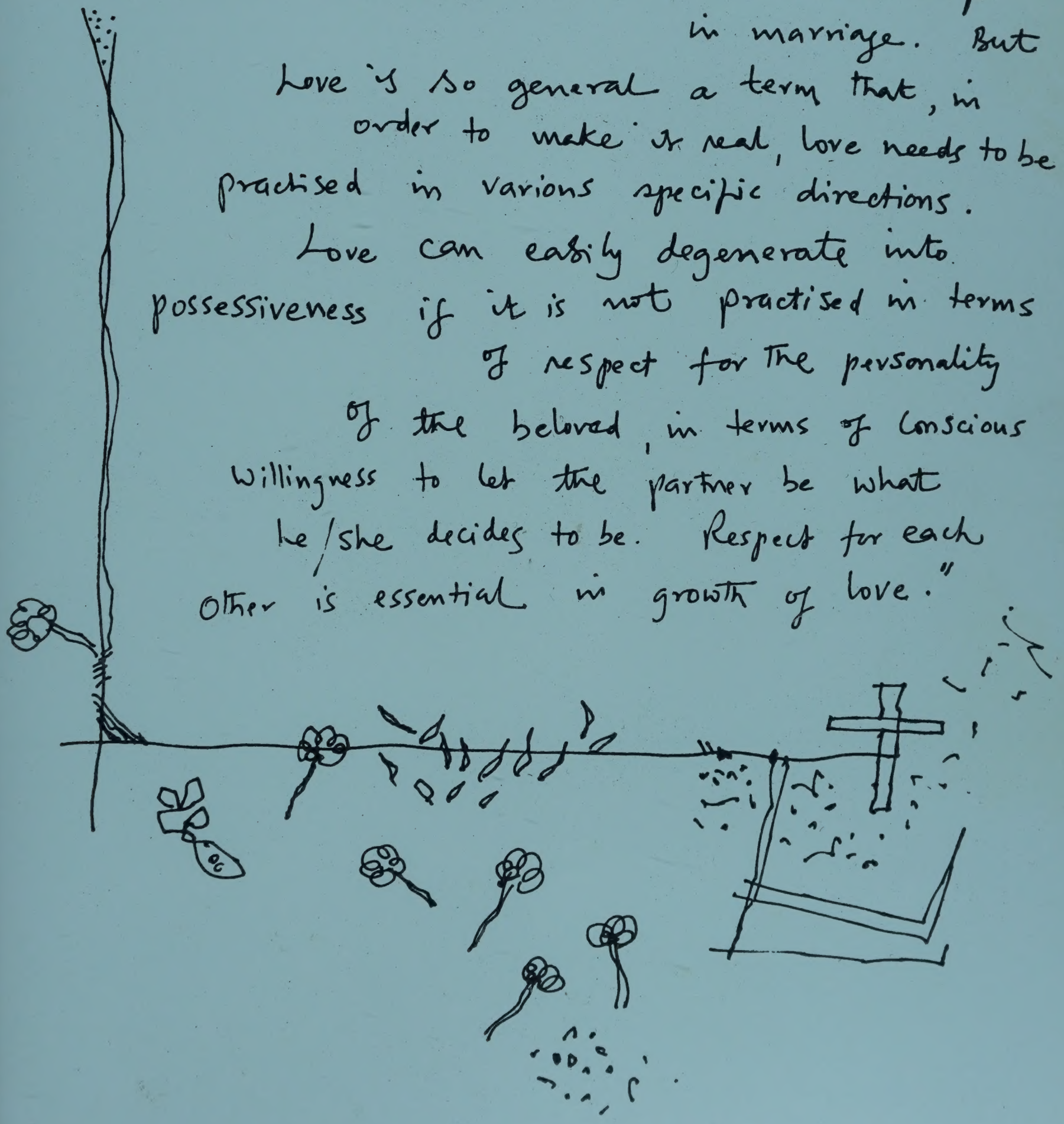
Let's work hard at our marriage - with joy. We will sometimes feel annoyed with each other. After all, you have your odd habits and I have mine. There will be times when our needs are not being met entirely. Yet, I intend for our marriage to be strong, to survive the dry periods and to become stronger than ever.

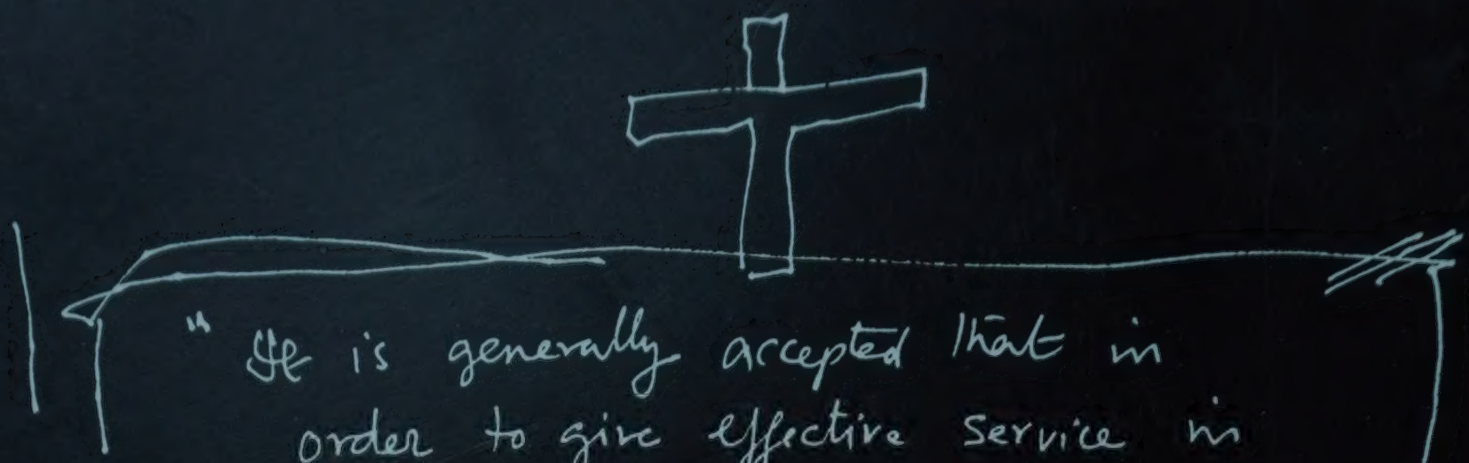
I want to take the risk of giving my love to you, deeply, openly, unconditionally – because I want the love and caring of our marriage to remain – and to grow.

Rev K.C. Joseph

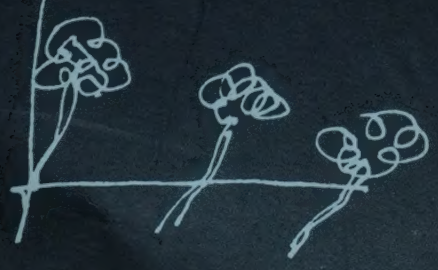
"Love is the word most frequently used in connection with the man-woman relationship in marriage. But Love is so general a term that, in order to make it real, love needs to be practised in various specific directions.

Love can easily degenerate into possessiveness if it is not practised in terms of respect for the personality of the beloved, in terms of conscious willingness to let the partner be what he/she decides to be. Respect for each other is essential in growth of love."





"It is generally accepted that in order to give effective service in various aspects of life people need Training. The engineer, the doctor, the tailor, the barber, all have had to undergo systematic training to do their job well. But it is often forgotten that men and women need Training to enable them to be truly human, to develop creative relationships with other people and most of all, to be facilitators of interpersonal relations among others. Even listening to others with real attention needs training. And no one can understand another sufficiently without learning to listen not only to the words but also to the feelings of the other."



Rev K.C. Joseph